

EO 9416

EMILIA WYNNDHAM.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"TWO OLD MEN'S TALES,"

"MOUNT SOREL," &c.

The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit, still and bright,
With something of an angel light.

WORDSWORTH.

SIMMS AND MINTYRE,
17, NORTON STREET, AND DONEGALL STREET, BELFAST.

TO
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, Esq.

ONE FROM AMONG THE COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF THOSE
DEEPLY INDEBTED, FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THEIR
MOTAL LIFE TO THE FINE INFLUENCES OF
HIS POETRY,
OFFERS THIS IMPERFECT TRIBUTE
OF
ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE.

ÉMILIA WYNDHAM.

Der rechte Griff und der rechte Ton

Das lernt sich nur um des Feldherrn Person.—WALLENSTEIN'S LAZER.

WRITTEN IN AN EVENING OF SPRING, SITTING BY MY SLEEPING AUNT,
AND LISTENING TO THE THRUSH SINGING NEAR ME.

Oh! sing again, sweet bird of heaven!
And pour thy varied, mellowed strain,
While twilight dims the shower of even,
Soft sinking o'er the fading plain.
Repeat that wild outburst of bliss,
That tender call—that thrill of joy—
And soothe, in such an hour as this,
Th' impatient thought—the wearied sigh.
Thy song, upon the ear of Night,
Comes warbling soft, and seeks the Power
Who fills thy spring-time with delight,
And thanks Him for the falling shower.
For budding stem, for leafy cell,
For dew-bedropped and green retreat,
Thy trembling notes incessant swell,
The offering of thine incense sweet.
God, who first called thee into life,
To feed, to sing, and to enjoy,

He called thee too to taste of heaven,
To dwell beneath this azure sky;
With these the feeling soul was given
To thrill with love and ecstasy!
He breathed the trembling spirit here,
Alive to all of Nature's charms,
Which greets her with the adoring tear,
And lives enraptured in her arms.
Does Evening draw her misty veil,
And hang on every flower and tree,
While crowding songsters swell the gale—
To thee the sense is ecstasy.

Or, when dark lurid clouds hang round,
Which glittering seams of lightning part,
The thundering crash, the deep resound,
With shuddering pleasure fill thy heart.

Or, dost thou taste the breeze of morn,
When the sun flames upon the east,
And sparkling dewdrops deck the thorn,
Is it not rapture to thy breast?

Or, when the moon is riding high,
While silvery clouds around her roll
O'er heaven's wide, starry, canopy—
What whispers to thy swelling soul?

Hath God thus highly strung thy heart—
Mysterious rapture bid thee know—
And wouldst thou from these scenes depart,
And to the world for pleasure go?

By empty aims, debasing cares,
And worthless hopes, thy bosom torn—
By coldness chilled, oppressed by glare—
To mediocrity be worn;

Then, wretched in its last estate,
And heartless in the path that's trod,
Grow discontented with thy fate,
And cast a murmuring thought to God?.

"Artless lines enough, my dear," said the fond mother, full of the inaccuracies of a young, unpractised hand, but interesting to me because they paint my Emilia"—and she passed her hand calmly and kindly over her daughter's shining hair—"too truly paint her, I am afraid, my dear enthusiast," continued she, looking fondly at her daughter's upturned face.

They were sitting upon the terrace, the mother upon a green garden-seat, the daughter upon the grass at her feet.

"Too truly!" said she, patting the loved cheek glowing with health and animation. "And yet—" and she looked at the paper which she held in her hand, and then at her daughter again—"there is nothing sickly in all this—nothing affected or namby-pamby, which, you know, I detest: high-strung, perhaps, that heart has been by the Almighty; but to me it seems destined for high, heroic things."

The daughter's eyes glistened, but she said nothing, and the mother went on as if speaking to herself.

"Heroic! did I say?—You are thinking—" and she took Emilia's hand—"of deeds of high courage—of strenuous effort—of vanquished difficulty—of victory achieved—of dragons and monsters of the wilderness—of Una and her lion—of Clarinda and her lance—or rather of Joan of Arc and a country saved. That is the sort of thing that was in your foolish little head. Come, tell truth—say it was so, my Emilia!"

"Ah, mamma! what is the use of confessing to the divine?

It was some sort of confused stuff of that sort when you used the word heroic!—a *very* big word for you, mamma.”

“Well, my dear, I think it is a very great compliment to the power of your verses that they have, for the moment, excited such a very sober person as I am to the ‘Ereles vein.’”

She gazed at her daughter again. She was, what she said, a very sober person, who rarely, if ever, indulged in the slightest exaggeration or even warmth of expression, and still more rarely suffered herself to be betrayed into anything beyond the demonstration of calm and well-disciplined feeling; but now she looked at her daughter’s ardent, animated, yet most truthful and ingenuous countenance, sighed, and repeated again the word “heroic.”

“Ah, my poor little poet! you are come three centuries too late into the world; but heroism is not out of date, though the outer garb and vesture of it are so changed that perhaps you poets—who, you know, are apt a little too much to be caught by the outsides of things—perhaps you poets might not know it again.

“Heroism!—To those who consider rightly, it is a far nobler thing now, when it is no longer a sound to mark the glowing excitement, the lofty enthusiasm, which fights and struggles in the brilliant mid-day, gilded by the sun, all warm and genial; but the slow, silent, death-struggle of the soul in solitude, darkness, and obscurity, against the heavy, wearying, every-day evils of every-day actual life: sacrifices of the hourly and the small, but the sum of which is existence—not offered in the fervour of the moment, but given, as it were, by inches; the heroic devotion to others, and those others not even worthy; far from grateful, too often resentful; combining patience, perseverance, endurance, gentleness, and disinterestedness—that is the heroism of our day, my dear poet!”

“I know, dear mamma, that you are terribly fond of the fireside virtues; I am sure they would be truly heroic in me!”

“So it would seem,” said her mother, pointing to the words, “impatient thought and wearied sigh,” in the little poem.

Emilia coloured a little.

“It was very wrong to feel so; but my poor aunt is so impatient!”

“And my poor Emilia so ill-disciplined.”

“Dearest of mothers, do not condemn me too severely; there are some virtues so hard to practise: for those I love I feel as if I could gladly die!”

“So I believe, but we must learn to die for those we cannot love,” said her mother, gravely.

“Ah, mother, mother! let it be for those I love—a dry crust—privations—pain—danger!” she exclaimed, brightening and smiling: “let me be like that charming Lady Harriet Acland, in the American war. Let me go with my husband to the battle, and nurse him in his tent, and follow him in a boat and under the fire of ten thousand muskets, to the log-hut in the

woods, among the wildest Indians: let me at least do that, dearest mamma!

"And oh!" cried she, and looking round with enthusiasm upon the wide-spreading and beautiful landscape before her—"anything with Nature! Only let me live with Nature! Only let me be free! Don't shut me up in a town! Don't let me live in a street, 'peeping over chimney-tops,' and then 'turn my sick heart to think of other things.' Oh, mamma! I never can, or will, live in a town!"

"That must be as your husband pleases, Emilia."

"Husband!—O mamma, we need not think of that this five hundred years;" and a slight blush just heightened for a moment the colour of her rosy cheek; and the mother's lip was just parted by as faint a smile; for the gate at the end of the long terrace walk was heard to open, and a young man was seen advancing from under the trees.

The gentleman who now approached them was a handsome young man, dressed in plain clothes, but with a certain air which at once marked him for a military man.

In that day, about the year 1800, when our military life was an active military life; one in which most men devoted to the profession had seen the grim visage of war face to face—had tasted of all its actual privations, sufferings, horrors, and humanities—of its heroism and of its terrors—military men really were a race apart, schooled in a world peculiar to themselves, which gave something ideal to the character, and frank and gallant to the bearing, and were exquisitely attractive to women. They, on their side, when they returned for short intervals to their country and to their homes, reposing, for a space, from the life of struggle, hardships, and exertion to which they were accustomed, and leaving the rude camp for that gentle society, felt as if they were restored to a paradise of innocence, peace, and beauty, and were animated by all the sweet passions, delicate and romantic feelings, and devoted loyalty to women and to their country, of which you, who live in these piping days of peace and luxury, can form no conception. As little can you comprehend the effect all this might produce upon the romantic imagination of nineteen in the country-house of a gentlemen of moderate fortune, which was visited rarely except by fox-hunting squires, boobies of elder sons very imperfectly educated, as elder sons were very apt to be *then* (they are a good deal better now), the apothecary, or the attorney; the clergyman of the parish, too often in those days (they are extremely advanced indeed since then; it is one of the best advancements made in our day) belonging to the class of either fox-hunters or of boobies.

What a sort of domestic Avatar it was, when a young man, practised in that true, universal life, which pervades an army in actual service—his character elevated by that spirit and courage which results from the generous combat with veritable pain and death—his mind and imagination filled with all the

infinitude of lively and romantic images which various climes and various scenes present—came into a society such as this; and, finding little sympathy for the abundance of his ideas and the elevation of his heart among the aforesaid fox-hunters and boobies, devoted his time and found his happiness in the ever-ready sympathy of sweet and imaginative woman!—spending hours unwearied by her side, while the rest of the world were hunting, or drinking, or idling—filling her fancy with the most bewitching pictures, and winning, as Othello did, his way to the too sincere and tender heart, “by the dangers he had known.”

The young Lieutenant-Colonel—for young as he was he had already attained that high rank—(men died thick and fast in those days of blood and carnage; and advancement, rapid but usually well-earned, waited on the survivors) the young Lieutenant-Colonel was a sort of distant connexion of Mrs. Wyndham: her brother, Sir Herbert Montague, having married the sister of his father; so, as they all were well acquainted together, there was a kind of cousinhood maintained among them. Mrs. Wyndham treated him something after the manner of an affectionate aunt, and Emilia with something of the unreserve of a cousin; that is to say, young as she was, she would scarcely have become so conversable and so well acquainted with any other man, and therefore no other man would have had so good an opportunity of discovering what a very clever and charming creature she was.

He came, however, sauntering along the terrace, and did not seem to proceed with any extraordinary despatch at the sight of the white dresses of the ladies upon the green seat at the other end. He was twisting a bit of wild rose in his mouth, and lounging, or rather strolling along, with his hands in his pockets; looking about him, and advancing at so leisurely a pace, as would have completely exonerated him, even in this our day, from the suspicion of any vulgar, red-coat gallantry, or *empressement* about the ladies. So that Emilia does not appear to be in any danger of being betrayed into an unfortunate passion, like the lady on the castle wall, for a knight “who loves and who rides away.”

The conversation, however, between the mother and daughter was stopped, and they both sat looking at him. He turns round, looks behind him—recedes a few paces—advances as much again—stops—looks—observes—twists the bit of briar in his mouth—but, upon the whole, advances, and at last reaches them, saying—

“I am looking at that curious sort of scheme that my good uncle” (he used to call Mr. Wyndham uncle, and Mrs. Wyndham aunt, because he had been a great deal with them when he was a child)—“that my good uncle seems to be carrying on there. Does he mean it for a military defence, or for a primrose bank for my pretty cousin here to amuse herself by rolling down?”

"I don't quite understand the plan," said Mrs. Wyndham. "You know I am no landscape gardener."

"I wish to Heaven you were, ma'am," said he abruptly, "and you would never set about scarping this pretty green bank, for the sake of making a walk over a small grassy hill deserve the name of terrace; which, it must be confessed, it has most unjustly obtained. The shrubberies, that are all being cleared away, and those foxgloves and broom-bushes, were so pretty on that rough bit of ground there. Were they not, Emilia? It will be years before it is even turfed; and it will have no keeping or character, after all."

He sat down by her upon the grass.

"A terrace, Emilia—a real terrace—is, or should be, quite a different sort of thing from this petty bit of ambition—I beg your pardon, ma'am," looking up at Mrs. Wyndham: "nobody can possibly think this place prettier than I do, as it is—or was, alas! but really, one who has seen a noble terrace such as I have seen at —, towering above a high *natural* escarpment, and commanding half a county, and the vast ocean, all mingling with the deep, deep blue of the sky, in the most glorious confusion, is vexed, Emilia, to see this sweet, sylvan scene, wanting to dress itself up in a paltry imitation. Now, Emilia, as it used to be, when I was last here—it was spring-time, then, you know—that brake was—nothing could be prettier: the green fern just springing up, and the wood-flowers—those white, purple-veined things—"

"Wood-anemones."

"Yes—yes—and the birches in little knots—and the golden broom—and foxgloves—"

"No," said she; "you must not put wood-anemones and foxgloves in flower together—that won't do."

"Won't it?" drawing a little closer to her; "but I may put a hare in; because, you know, hares run about at all times of the year: and do you remember our catching the bright eye of the brown hare, as she sat upon her form, and then scudded off, and we scrambled after her, and how you tore your frock? You don't care to play such tricks now you have been at Madame Devery's school."

"I should hope not, indeed, or a world of good instruction would have been sadly thrown away. But you must not say school."

"What must I say?—teach me everything, small and great;" and he came still a little nearer, and looked down at her as she sat idly twisting a long, feathery grass round her fingers—"teach me everything, great and small, proper and right: I shall learn everything from you—I never forgot one of your lessons. Everything you say dwells with me. I shall think of them many a fine, silent night, when I mount guard in Spain; I shall remember your sayings at Elvas; I shall never say foxglove, and what do you call it?—wood-what?—in the same sentence again; and I shall never say Madame Devery's school—only say what I shall say."

"You remember so accurately about the wood-anemones, that it is quite worth while to take pains with you," said she, laughing. "You must say Madame Devery's simply, for it is not a *seminary*—that's a man's thing; and it is not an *establishment*—that is a vulgar thing; and it is not a *school*—that is an *unheard-of* thing: it is purely and simply Madame Devery's; and be sure you call it so if you chance to talk about it to Miss Hesketh to-morrow."

"I'll take care. And now," still watching her hands as they twisted the grass into a thousand idle forms, "tell me who is coming to-morrow; because I guess we are going to be very grand, for certain pine-apple, grape, and fish reasons, best known to myself."

"We are going to be extremely grand," was the answer; "so pray put on all your best manners, and scour up all your most wonderful and unbelievable travellers' tales, to astonish all our weak minds, as you know very well how to do."

"But you must tell me who is coming; you must give me the *carte du pays*; you must describe, as only you can describe, these people who are coming to drink your father's best Chaliers port, or I shall not know how to behave myself. You know we come home such brutes and savages from the wars."

She gave a merry glance at him.

"Well, then, the day, you must know, is in honour of Sir Thomas and Lady Maria Hesketh, who, you are to understand, stand in a very close and singular relationship to me, inasmuch as I am mamma to their child."

"Curious fact enough: we wait explanation."

"We were at Madame Devery's together, you must know; and, child as you still pretend to think me here, I was *there* a very, very old and reverend, great girl, and Lisa was four years younger, which in those regions counts for half a century; and so she was put under my sage guidance; and so—she became my child."

"I understand. And what sort of a child did she prove?"

"Oh, she was, and is, such a sweet, dear, naughty little thing!"

"Very pretty, and all that, I suppose?"

"Oh, you never saw anything half so pretty; and such a little, gay, bewitching—and such a loving little darling!"

"And you had the care of her?"

His eyes were all this time fixed upon her. She had turned a little away, and did not see it, but the mother did; and the mother smiled to herself, and thought, "Dear innocent Emilia! describing your friend in such enchanting colours! But it is of no use; he is not for Miss Hesketh."

"Oh, yes! and much care I took—I really *did*," turning to him, and looking seriously. "You may smile, but I really *did*. She was a careless little thing, and it was her turn to tear her frocks then, and my turn to mend them; and I really liked it as well. Imagine if I loved her!"

He smiled, and said nothing. The mother was right—the subject did not interest him.

Presently he lifted up his head from a sort of reverie into which he had fallen, and he said—

"Now, you must tell me about Sir Thomas and Lady Maria."

She glanced up at her mother.

"Must I describe Sir Thomas, mamma?"

The mother shook her head.

"Mamma says no. I don't like Sir Thomas; he is not one of my sort."

"And Lady Maria?"

"No; I positively do so exceedingly *dis-like* Lady Maria, that, without appealing to mamma, I will of myself say, 'Find her out for yourself—that is, if you think it worth while to take the trouble.'"

"I like to hear you describe. Is there no one else coming?"

"Oh, yes, quite a party. We sit down eighteen to dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Hook; and Mr. and Mrs. Cook; and Mr. James and two Miss Hooks; and Mr. John and one Miss Cook; and Mr. Squire Phillips, as he is called here, and Mrs. Phillips, whom I like excessively—stay, how many have I got?" She counted them upon her fingers. "And myself, fifteen; and yourself, sixteen, and Mr. Wilcox—oh! I had nearly forgotten darling Johnny Wilcox! And who can the last be?" looking up at her mother; "I am short one."

"Your father desired a place might be reserved for Mr. Danby, though he did not think it very probable that he would stay."

"The man from London that comes on business to papa?"

"The same."

"Well, that will not be anything to us; he will have nothing to do with us. So Colonel Lenox must make his amusement, as he can, out of those already reported—and I recommend Johnny Wilcox."

"And why so?"

"Because he is an original, which none of the rest, but Squire and Mrs. Phillips, indeed—and they are as old as the hills—can be called. People may be excessively uncultivated, and excessively devoid of anything like *ton*, or the conventional manners of the world, and yet be anything in the world but original. May they not, mamma?"

Her mother nodded.

"Bad copies of bad models—for little minds do not even dare to be themselves. Johnny Wilcox for me!"

Man is born, bred, reared, dyed, double-dyed in jealousy; it is the universal passion.

He did not like even to hear her praise Johnny Wilcox.

"He seems very happy in your admiration."

"So, I assure you, he is."

"Your *next* favourite to Miss Hesketh?"

"My *very* next!" with a saucy smile.

"I am impatient to behold the man honoured with so large a share of Miss Wyndham's esteem."

"Really! Well, you shall be indulged to-morrow."

And now they all three rose and began to walk up and down the terrace.

She was in excellent spirits and full of talk, for she had an abundant imagination, an open, innocent heart, and a most overflowing tongue. I always thought her very handsome when I knew her, but that was, I believe, because she exercised such a charm over every one: the learned in such things would not have called her so, perhaps.

Emilia had not regular features, but no one could deny that she was a very fine girl, full of health and animation, with two very expressive eyes, of whatever colour you please to call them, for no one could ever decide the matter; a sweet, delicate mouth, expressive of both sense, temper, and feeling; a nice, steady, round chin; abundance of brown hair; a colour like a rose; a light, elastic, but somewhat full-formed figure, with a pair of the most beautiful arms in the world, which last advantage gave a singular elegance to her gestures: however, when you were with her, or talking to her, you seemed as little to think of what she looked like as she did herself.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and she was sauntering up and down, chatting and smiling, when the supper-bell rang, and two gentlemen emerged from the shrubbery: one was her father, the other his man of business; that is to say, an eminent legal gentleman from London who was with him.

This gentleman—though rather an uncouth one he was—practised in some one of those branches of the profession which confine men to their chambers, and never summon them forth to plead in public, or, indeed, to mingle much with men in general. There is, however, in this chamber-practice abundant exercise for the acutest intellect, and a vast experience of the world is acquired, though usually of the worse half of the world. Men who devote their lives to such pursuits become, or are apt to become, singular in their habits, suspicious in their views, unsympathising and cold in their tempers; their intellects are often preternaturally excited, though improving in acuteness rather than extension—in clearness rather than in breadth of comprehension.

Mr. Danby was a thin, spare man, whose clothes rather hung upon than dressed him; his hair was either rusted or grizzled, it was difficult to say which, but fell in a sort of uncouth disorder over a long and thin face, very pale, and only illuminated by a slow but bright and piercing eye; his manner was not vulgar, for he was never in the slightest degree occupied with himself: it was uncouth, yet not disagreeable, because it was so perfectly plain and that of a thoroughly sensible man. The only thing unpleasant about him was the expression of his mouth and his sardonic smile; there was something cynical and suspicious in both which was displeasing.

The gentlemen came up together, and Mr. Wyndham presented Mr. Danby to his wife and daughter, with that sort of air which says, "This gentleman is highly valued by me—make him welcome."

On their approach, the Colonel had turned aside, and his hands as usual in his coat pockets, had sauntered away by himself. There was nothing he abhorred so much as vulgar associations, and, with the impertinence of his age and profession, he hastily concluded that all men of business were of a sort to be avoided.

In the mean time, Mrs. Wyndham addressed Mr. Danby with her usual politeness, and Mr. Wyndham and his daughter talked a little together; and thus walking all four in a line, they approached the house, where the supper-bell was still ringing, and entered for supper.

Mr. Danby's eye had *fixed*, as the expression is, the young lady when he was presented to her; indeed, she was not at that moment to be disregarded even by an old hackneyed lawyer, she looked so charming and handsome, all blooming and animation, with her brown hair about her face, and her gipsy hat hanging upon her arm. And as the gentleman entered the house, he stooped his head, and in a low voice asked the father whether he remembered Miss F—— (a celebrated actress), when in the perfection of her attractions, for that he thought his daughter very like her.

Some years ago he had once seen Miss F—— perform one of her celebrated parts at the theatre, and she had served as his standard of ideal perfection from that time to this.

CHAPTER II.

May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?—KING LEAR.

THEY entered a fair-proportioned, well-built modern house; one, at least, that might have served two generations.

It was handsomely furnished; the rooms were light and cheerful; the whole aspect of things within was particularly agreeable to the eye. There were a large, roomy entrance-hall, lofty and airy, a handsome dining-room, a grand saloon, breakfast-room, and library, as is usual in houses of this description, all fitted up in a style that had been, rather than what would now be called very handsome; for it had, in fact, been the work of Mr. Wyndham's father, and was in the taste of the latter part of George the Second's reign. There were cabriole chairs, and satin curtains, and girandoles, and gilded and painted tables, all in some degree bearing the marks of antiquity; and the only thing displeasing to the taste was, that these were intermixed with sundry rich and expensive pieces of furniture in a style entirely different, for it was after the French taste of the period, which was *à la Grecque*, or *à la Egyptienne*,

according to the ideas of the great conqueror who then ruled France, or of his fair Creole bride, whose exquisite taste in these matters we, of the second *renaissance*, are sometimes inclined to dispute. Certainly the sphinx-headed ornaments upon some of the newly-imported pieces of furniture, and the pure lines of Grecian art in others, harmonised ill enough with the rich, elaborate, and somewhat quaint magnificence of the Pompadour reign.

One other thing was also rather unpleasant at the Oaks—for such was the name of Mr. Wyndham's place—there were always alterations going on; and I know few things so disagreeable as bricks, mortar, and carpenters about, even to those who have not to pay for them. Mr. Wyndham was one of those who is ever doing and has never done—the slave of ten thousand imaginary necessities, which proved an equal drain upon his purse and upon the patience of his clear-sighted and very sensible wife.

Of his plans, however, she was in general kept in pretty complete ignorance, for he belonged to that weak species of characters who are most particularly jealous of interference, and of every kind of influence—not excluding even the influence of reason. His wife, therefore, after a few ineffectual efforts gently to impel in a right direction one with understanding so far inferior to her own, had yielded up the point, and had employed herself in quietly endeavouring to remedy such evils of importance as arose, or to endure with good humour such trivial ones as were perpetually occurring.

But the false and irksome position which she occupied had produced an effect upon her character not altogether to have been desired. She was silent in her habits; cold, and almost severe in her general aspect; cherished within her own mind a thorough disgust of life, and was very little liked, understood, or appreciated.

The only thing she cared for upon earth was Emilia; and such was the view she had taken of a woman's position in society, that she looked upon her rather as the destined victim of unavoidable and irritating evils than as the hopeful candidate for love and happiness. Her time and efforts were employed in endeavouring to strengthen and fortify the mind of the young and imaginative girl, to lower her expectations, strengthen her powers of endurance, and prepare her for that existence which she had herself found to be such a cheat.

It was fortunate that Emilia's temper was so cheerful and hopeful that it resisted the baneful influence which such views might have exercised over her habits of mind, so that, while well disciplined and prepared for the combat, her spirits were buoyant, as if she had already gained the victory.

They entered the dining-room, and sat down to supper, which was almost as elaborate as a modern dinner, and differing from it chiefly in the circumstance that all the viands were disposed upon the table at once. Emilia and Colonel Lenox sat on each

side of Mrs. Wyndham, the strange gentleman by the master of the house.

The two parties did not much amalgamate at first, or join in conversation. Mr. Wyndham and his guest talked in a low voice to each other; the three others cheerfully discussed any trifling matters before them.

The general composure and tranquillity were first interrupted by Mr. Wyndham addressing his wife in a vexed, fretful manner, with—

"I was promised some grouse for supper to-night, and here is only an odious roast fowl."

"Why, I am very sorry you should be disappointed, Mr. Wyndham," was the reply; "but when the man asked half-a-guinea a brace for them, I really felt inclined to be shabby, and send him away without his reckoning."

"Everything one particularly likes is always half-a-guinea a brace with women," was the muttered reply, accompanied by a slight sneer of intelligence to his guest, who however made no answer to the appeal, either by word or gesture.

"What have you there before you, ma'am?"

"Sweetbreads."

"Humph!—Emilia, is that an apricot tart?"

"No, papa—cherry, I think."

"Are apricots, too, madam, half-a-guinea a half-dozen, because I rather expressed a wish for some, I think, yesterday?—but it's no matter. Luckily," addressing his friend, "I am no epicure; it being no longer the fashion, as in my father's days, for ladies to superintend the preparations for their husbands' comforts. Much better employed they are now; since the sex have become intellectual, and meddle with metaphysics and politics, and read Rousseau and D'Alembert, a noble contempt for these trifling matters has arisen, and it is fortunate for those who can fancy black-broth."

"Well," said Colonel Lenox, "self-denial is the last virtue I should think necessary to practise in this house. Here is some excellent-looking stuff before me; let me send you some of it."

"Savoury jelly!—sham!" was the contemptuous answer. "Biggs"—to his butler—"cut me a slice of that ham, and give me a glass of Burgundy. I have a little choice wine here," turning again to his guest; "will you try it?"

"With pleasure." And, turning to Emilia, he asked—"Won't you take wine?"

She accepted, and pledged him; and, as she did so, a soft and very agreeable smile for an instant gave sweetness to the cynical mouth.

He looked as if he very much wished to enter into conversation with her, but did not exactly know how to begin. At last, with some abruptness, he inquired whether she ever came to London.

She had been there only for very short periods of time, she said, when she was at school at Twickenham; and she really

cared very little whether she ever saw it again—she did not like London.

"All young ladies prefer the country, as a matter of course," was Mr. Wyndham's remark; "it is so amiable."

Mr. Danby cast his cold, penetrating eye upon the young lady at this; but she neither coloured with consciousness nor with temper; she only laughed good-humouredly at the little sally.

The eye softened.

"May I ask what it is you find so disagreeable in London?"

"Everything—the noise, the heat, the wretched imprisonment, the strong contrasts—the misery and the glare, the want and the luxury, the beggars on the *pavé*, and the glitter on the ring."

The stranger mused a little, and said—

"I suppose these contrasts must strike an unpractised eye: I confess I never see them in this light. Want and wretchedness there are, and must be, everywhere, so long as there are improvidence and crime, of which they are the concomitants and the consequences. I do not know that people are more innocent or less wretched in the country."

"I think they are probably both," said Mrs. Wyndham; "but certainly, as Emilia says, there is not that harsh contrast: you do not see misery and luxury elbowing one another as in the streets—in the country, at least, luxury is in the habit of helping misery."

"And, perhaps, thereby increasing it; but I believe charity, or the playing at such, is one of the afflictations of the age. I understand every lady in the country has her charity club and her charity school in her park: she could not at all get on without it—it is said."

Emilia looked at him with a sort of indignant surprise. He did not seem to observe it, and went on:—

"Nothing disgusts me like pretence and seeming."

"But what do you call pretence and seeming?" cried Colonel Lenox. "You first assume that the thing is so, and then imagine yourself to be disgusted at it."

"I neither assume nor imagine myself. I believe human nature to be a sham, and I hate shams; that is all I say."

"And woman's nature the sham of shams," cried Mr. Wyndham.

"I don't pretend to know anything about that," was the reply; "the sex has always been an enigma to me. But my course of life has led me little in the way of it."

"The better for you," was the short answer of Mr. Wyndham, who, thrown back in his chair, seemed to think the subject too uninteresting for discussion.

There was silence for a short space. Then the stranger began again:—

"Then Miss Wyndham never intends to visit London again?"

"I don't say *that*. I hope to see it many times; but I don't like it."

"Consistent!" from Mr. Wyndham.

A cynical smile from the guest.

Colonel Lenox sat all this time playing with the ears of Mr. Wyndham's favourite setter, a permitted guest even in the supper-room. He coloured a little at each of Mr. Wyndham's rude speeches, but prudently said nothing.

"I should have thought," pursued Mr. Danby, addressing Mrs. Wyndham, "that life in the country would want both excitement and variety, and that the brilliancy of a London season would have charms irresistible even for the most reasonable of her sex."

"Perhaps so, if our fortunes gave us a right to take a brilliant share in such brilliant doings; otherwise, I confess with Emilia that I think London a very dull place."

The stranger fixed his eye upon her with a curious sort of expression, and the suspicious, sarcastic smile again stole over his features. He glanced at Mr. Wyndham.

"Oh, nothing can equal *our* prudence and economy," said the master of the house, with a meaning smile.

Lenox again raised his head, looked from one to the other, seemed to grow very hot, pushed back his chair, and went to the window.

"What a lovely moonlight night!" he exclaimed, throwing it up.

Emilia and Mrs. Wyndham were soon at his side. Mr. Danby followed.

They all stood in the large window, looking out upon the beautiful starry night; the moon tinting the trees of the shrubberies, and throwing deep, heavy shadows on the grass-plot. It was a most delightful evening—a heavenly scene of silence, harmony, and peace.

There was a general pause.

"I do not wonder that Miss Wyndham cannot endure London," said a voice, at length, close behind her.

She looked up. It was Mr. Danby. He was looking at her with a softness that quite altered the expression of his face. The man of business even sighed, as he said,—

"This is, indeed, a very different sort of existence. It is very beautiful."

"We are very fond of this window," said Mrs. Wyndham; "it opens to the ground, and gives us such a perfect view of what we esteem one of the prettiest points about the grounds. Emilia, give me my shawl; it is such a lovely night that I am inclined to take a walk on the grass-plot."

"Come along, then," said Lenox, offering his arm; and they stepped out together.

Emilia followed, and Mr. Danby with her. He walked by her side some time in silence; he seemed, as indeed he was, full of the influences of the society and the scene: it was something new—it was something unexpected. In that dry and withered heart—dry as the parchments upon which he endorsed his con-

rejoicings—a sort of soft, life-breathing influence and warmth began to diffuse itself—a charm equally unexpected, unintelligible, and ineffable.

He had never experienced such sensations before in the forty-five years of his life; for he had spent existence chiefly in his chambers. He knew but one woman intimately, and that was his own mother, with whom, in her house in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, he regularly spent his Sundays when they were not employed in bringing up arrears of business; the only other person he saw daily was his old servant—his own very ugly old bedmaker. He had not been in the company of young ladies for years.

Strange it may appear, but men actually do pass their lives in this manner, without seeming to be aware how existence is thrown away, and end in the solitude with which they began, unless some happy accident brings them into contact with some young and pretty girl, with whom they immediately fall in love; and who, if she is very poor, and very desirous of getting married, perhaps condescends to accept and to tyrannise over them for the rest of their days.

The man before us was not, however, of the ordinary stamp. He was a man of very superior abilities, and had deep feelings, quite unknown to himself, lying, as it were, congealed within his breast. He had that species of imagination which belongs to intellect and passion united; but it had so rarely been excited, that nothing would have astonished him more than to have been suspected of possessing it. He looked upon himself at the most anti-poetic being on the face of the earth, and cherished the most supreme and sovereign contempt for all of the imaginative tribe. The only bad feature in Mr. Danby's character was his incurable suspicion; he had inherited it from his mother, who was never known to think well of any human being.

He did not appear to have had the slightest suspicion of what was going on within him, as he walked in silence by Miss Wyndham, absorbed in the most agreeable sensations; while she, thinking him all the time very dull, and longing to join Colonel Lenox and her mother, dutifully and politely forbore to step forward.

At last he found courage to address her again; and then he talked in so rational and sensible a manner, that she began to find it not at all tedious to listen. His conversation became almost interesting as he described, in words eloquent by their brevity and simplicity, the new sensations which this peep into nature had afforded to one whose life was so monotonous and uncoloured. Anything in the least degree approaching to personal compliment he had too much native sense of propriety and good taste to indulge in, yet she could not help feeling rather pleased that a man, evidently of so strong and masculine a tone of mind, could take interest in talking to such a girl as herself.

They passed a beautiful China rose-tree, at that time a rarity

in England ; it was in full bloom, and, as the moonbeams fell upon its lovely waxen flowers, he stopped to admire them : she politely gathered the prettiest she could find, and, mixing them with a sprig or two of white jessamine, presented them to him. (Those flowers, years and years after, were laid upon that man's bosom in his coffin. That very night they were deposited between two sheets of law paper, carefully and neatly folded ; and they never afterwards left him. Wherever he went, this small, white, folded sheet of paper, carefully pinned together, travelled too. There have been secret tears shed over that little paper ; and yet the man appeared all the time just as dry, business-like, suspicious, and cynical as ever ; and was so, in every other instance, I believe).

"Thank you," said he, taking them from her hand: "I never saw any flowers I thought so pretty before ; indeed, I rarely see flowers, or anything else, in truth" (with another sigh), "that can awaken the agreeable sensations I experience here. You are very fond of this place, Miss Wyndham?"

"Excessively! foolishly!—if it can be foolish to love one's home too well; but, certainly, I should be thought very foolish if any one knew how greatly I prefer it to all the much finer places about us."

"Miss Wyndham *never* means to leave it, of course?" with one of his slow smiles.

This she thought rather impertinent from the acquaintance of an hour, so she felt herself entitled to walk a few steps on, and join her mother and Colonel Lenox, with whom she soon fell into pleasant, animated discourse, and the stranger was left to himself: but this he did not much care for; he was rather pleased not to have to talk, but to follow her white dress with his eyes as it floated before him—like the swan-like wings of some angel he thought it—and gazed at and smelled at his flowers; following the party up and down with his slow, slovenly, shambling kind of gait—now and then looking at the sky, and now and then bending his eyes to the ground, and now and then relieving his heart with a sigh.

He was indeed experiencing new and unexpected sensations, which the sweet influences of nature, the beauty of the night, excited, as the moon shed its sweet light upon the loftiest shrubs and trees of the plantations among which they were walking, and cast its deep mysterious shadows upon the grass—the white moths flitting, from time to time, like the sylphs of the night, across their path—the profound stillness of all around only interrupted by the low murmuring tones of the talkers before him.

He was not one ever accustomed to converse with himself, to question or to analyse his own sensations, nor even to take much account of his own conduct: to all such finer operations of the mind he was a stranger. His intellect was occupied with those nice and difficult questions of abstract law which

belong to his branch of the profession; and when he rested his mind, it was usually by the perusal of a newspaper, or, at most, one of those common narrative novels of the day which, before the mighty Master of the North raised the tone and enlarged the scope of such compositions, might, with some very rare exceptions, be called literary pastimes. That Mr. Danby did, however, read novels is certain; and, except his newspaper, he read nothing else. His feelings and imagination had never had time or opportunity to develope themselves; he rarely or never left London, and, in London, mingled not at all in general society. Clubs, as they now exist, were not then invented. The few associations of this sort were combinations of those who already were in and loved society; and not a means of drawing the solitary student from his chambers, though it were merely to look upon the world.

Of female society, as I have said, he knew *nothing*. The sort of electric effect which the apparition of Emilia, in all the bloom of youth and health, prattling gaily to her companions, her straw hat hanging upon her arm, produced upon him, was unintelligible to him. He did not know—he did not ask himself, what was the matter with him; he yielded himself, like a lamb, to the sweet intoxicating influence, without reflection upon its character, far less with the slightest idea of connecting his present sensations with any future. The walk had ended, and they all retired to their apartments. The lawyer was shown into his. On the table of the room lay several of those papers tied with red tape, the perusal and correction of which formed the business of his life: before preparing for rest these were to be looked over.

He had his precious bouquet still in his hand, and this is what he did with it.

He poured out a glass of water—put the flowers one by one into it with the minutest care, so that not one leaf should touch the wet, nor a flower be defiled; then he sat down to his papers, putting the glass as close to him as it could possibly stand; and then he bent down his head, and was soon poring over his conveyances, and immersed in business; while the glass of flowers stood there, shedding a sort of unseen influence over his feelings, and perfuming, if I may be allowed the expression, every secret chamber of his head and heart.

CHAPTER III.

But hark! the chiming clocks to dinner call;
A hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall.—POPE.

THE next day was a day of extraordinary festivity—a great country dinner.

Mr. Wyndham was excessively fond of giving dinners, and he gave them in a style of profusion that vied with the enter-

tainments of those around him, who were most of them people much richer than himself.

Mrs. Wyndham had attempted her best to unite magnificence with prudence in these displays, and to diminish, by a skilful management, the expense of entertainments, which their frequency rendered a matter of some importance; but she found herself perpetually thwarted in her endeavour; and at length, wearied of contending the matter between a two-guinea and a five-guinea dish of fish, she gave it up in despair, consoling herself with the reflection that, after all, a hundred a-year, more or less, would cover all these differences; and, as she was kept in perfect ignorance of her husband's affairs, quite unaware how many of these hundreds were wasted in the same manner.

It is incredible how some men contrive to get through their money without either credit, amusement, or conscientious satisfaction.

The dinner was really a very handsome affair, conducted as the supplies were, under Mr. Wyndham's particular directions; and the dessert, which his own hothouse and greenhouses were inadequate to supply, quite magnificent.

You will not be surprised to hear that Mr. Danby had accepted the invitation to stay the day, but he was to depart in the mail that evening at ten o'clock.

He and Mr. Wyndham had spent the whole morning together in Mr. Wyndham's study; Emilia, her mother, and Colonel Lenox, in their usual favourite place upon the terrace; for the weather was exquisitely fine, and the ladies sat at their work under the tree, while Colonel Lenox read the "Glaour" to them; he had just got it down from London. It was hard to say which of the three seemed to enjoy it the most. It was not till late in the afternoon that Mr. Wyndham and Mr. Danby, having finished business, the one gentleman adjourned to his butler's pantry to superintend the decanting of his various wines, on the excellence of which he greatly piqued himself, and the other, finding the house deserted, took his hat and strolled out.

He rambled about for some time, inhaling all the delights of a fine August day among the pleasant shrubberies, grass-plots, and knots of flowers and rose-trees which surrounded the Oaks, and on which Mrs. Wyndham and her daughter lavished so much care, and spent so many sweet and peaceful hours, employed.

He did not very well seem to know what he was seeking, but he was certainly in search of something as he pursued his walk. At last, coming out from behind a thick knot of laurels, bird-cherry, and mountain-ash mingled, he found himself just behind the tree under which the party was sitting.

Mrs. Wyndham was on the green seat, engaged on a piece of tapestry work; and on a lower bench, on which her feet rested, and separated by her, one from the other, sat Emilia and the Colonel.

He was reading aloud, and the tones of his sweet, rich voice, were to be heard; she had let her hands and her knitting-needles fall into her lap, and, lost in attention, her eyes resting upon him, was drinking in every delightful word of the delightful poem.

Mr. Danby stood at a little distance behind, observing them. It was a beautiful picture of social happiness, and perfect! It wanted no addition. The two young people seemed formed for each other; the mother's presence gave a sort of sanctity to the scene. The stern man of law stood in mute observation, as one riveted by some enchantment to the spot. Any idea of jealousy, even of envy, was foreign to his thoughts and feelings; he had never even idealised such a picture of happiness as belonging to himself—he had never brought the charming creature and himself into the same circle of thought, as I may say. He had something of the sensation we experience when we view in some exquisite work of art a scene we never hope to see realised upon earth; but the image was being engraven upon his heart in indelible characters; and the sigh with which he turned away, unperceived, and resumed his solitary walk in the shrubbery, is probably better understood by you, my reader, than it was by himself.

It was three o'clock, and time to go in and dress; and, at a quarter to four, our party assembled in Mrs. Wyndham's dining-room, expecting the carriages to arrive.

The drawing-room is all in its best dress. Several articles of expensive furniture have arrived from London a few days ago, and Mr. Wyndham is walking up and down the room, surveying them all with considerable anxiety; now, with his foot, smoothing down his new double-pile carpet; now stopping to gaze at four girandoles which, rather too elaborately ornamented, occupy the four corners of the room, and with which he does not seem satisfied.

He is better pleased with a new Italian table of fine marbles, ornamented with the usual birds and basin, which, very handsomely mounted, occupies the pier between the two large windows.

Mrs. Wyndham is sitting upon her sofa, and he goes up to her from time to time.

"I don't quite like those girandoles, after all, Mrs. Wyndham."

She had assured him, when he ordered them, that he would find them too elaborate and heavy for his room, and had received only a pettish reprimand for her interference. She was, however, too prudent to remind him of that.

"I am sorry they do not please you, but I think they look very well."

"How can you be so wanting in taste! Don't you see how much too gorgeous they are for the rest of the furniture? Either I must change them, or we must refurnish the whole room."

"Much better change them. But do you think it much signifies?—the room looks very well. They will give abundance of light, and I dare say nobody will care about them but ourselves."

"That is always the way you talk, in your dry, utilitarian style, which you think sensible. *I* could not endure such a blemish before my eyes for a day."

And he turned pettishly away. He soon came back again however, with—

"How do you like my carpet, madam?"

"It is a very handsome carpet."

"Rich, but the colour rather too glaring. I thought it had been flatter."

"So I thought, too, when you showed me the pattern."

"Thought what? Why couldn't you say so at the time? Here is a carpet that has cost me seventy guineas at least, and all spoiled by a little mistake in the colour! Why could you not say what you thought?"

"I did say—I thought it had been flatter."

"I dare say the fellow has sent me the wrong pattern, after all. Oh! you thought it had been flatter! What a rascally fellow! I am sure this is not what I chose; but he thought to get rid of a less saleable pattern, I'll be bound. I have a good mind to return the carpet on his hands."

"I am afraid you cannot do that, for it was certainly the pattern you chose."

"I am almost sure—nay, now I look at it again, I am quite certain it is *not* the pattern I chose."

Mrs. Wyndham gave a dissenting shake of the head.

"You always love to contradict me—that I know; but *I am sometimes* in the right. I am certain the reds are very considerably brighter."

Mrs. Wyndham rose, crossed the room deliberately, opened a card-table drawer, took out a twelve-inch square of carpet, and laid it upon the floor.

"Pshaw!"

And he turned away to the window, for the ten-thousandth time under a mistake, and as ready on the ten-thousandth and one occasion to be as offended with contradiction as ever.

His mode of getting out of this scrape was to be sulky, and not to speak to his wife again for an hour.

And in such miserable daily, nay, hourly contentions, excited by such frivolous and petty interests, was this high-minded and extremely clever woman destined to pass the best part of every day for twenty years of her life.

Emilia was the only spectator of the scene. She had become so accustomed to her father's fretful temper from her childhood, that it seemed to her as a natural annoyance which was, as a matter of course, to be there, and which troubled her no more than the noise of the great wheel did the sick workman at Coalbrook Dale. Her mother, a woman of much reflection, had, as

soon as she became aware of the unimprovable nature of this trifling, vain character, united to a peevish, fretful temper, endeavoured to meet the evil in the best manner she could.

She had soon obtained sufficient mastery over her own temper and feelings not to suffer them to be outwardly, in the least degree, discomposed by these perpetual annoyances; and though she never could prevent a certain pain within upon every fresh occasion, which kept her heart perpetually sore, she was able to conceal this from her daughter; with all a mother's generosity, most carefully avoiding, by look or gesture, to excite a sympathy in her daughter's heart which might cloud her young spirits. She had succeeded to such perfection that, without the slightest insensibility to her mother's happiness, Emilia had become perfectly insensible to her father's temper; and, like a good child, submitted to his wayward and perverse ways cheerfully and good-humouredly, as she thought a child ought to do.

Colonel Lenox was less passive. It made him excessively hot and impatient; but as he had, on occasion of one or two outbursts, received an intimation from his aunt that such an interference was quite inadmissible, he used to sit champing the bit, and pulling the setter's ears, and admiring the sweetness and good humour of his aunt and cousin with as little outward demonstration of sympathy as might be.

It was, however, considered fortunate by both ladies when, upon such occasions, he chanced not to be there.

He now, however, came in, looking excessively charming and handsome, particularly well dressed and elegant, and quite prepared to make an impression upon the heart of Miss Hesketh, if he should feel so inclined; however, for the present, he made his way up to Emilia with a good deal more *empressement* than was ordinary with him. She was sitting near an open window, and looking very pretty, and he drew a chair close to her.

"You were not tired with sitting so long out of doors? Nay, I need not ask you—how well you are looking to-day! Mr. Wilcox and his heart will be in danger. What is this pretty chain made of that is hanging in this nice, negligent manner round your neck?" (taking up one end of the long, pendent ornament)—"and this cross?"

"That is an amulet. It is to guard me, you know, from all evil influences."

"From the influence of an evil eye?—No doubt. Very *à propos*! There is one eye, at least, perpetually bent upon you—for evil or for good, I cannot tell which; but you certainly have fascinated that lanky scrivener whom your father seems to make such account of."

"Do you know that scrivener is a very sensible man? You cannot think how agreeable he made himself last night."

"Ah, naughty Emilia!" he exclaimed, with one of his sweetest and most fascinating smiles—"don't praise him as you did Johnny Wilcox. I believe I could find in my heart to be jealous of this footstool if you praise it."

"You want to absorb all admiration in your sweet self," said she, laughing; "I did not give you credit for so much selfish vanity."

"Give me but the power to absorb the admiration of one human being, and I will give up all the rest of the 'varsal world,'" said he, in the same tone, but with a tenderness in his eye that sent the blood coursing to her cheek.

The company began to arrive.

The Hooks and the Cooks I shall not stay to describe—they are just such as everybody in the world is. You may fancy them seated upon the chairs, playing scenery for the more principal characters of the piece, which is very much the destiny of such people in real life. Mr. Wilcox was next announced,—a rather rustic-looking youth, with fair hair, grey eyes, ruddy complexion, and not very finely cut features, yet with an honest heart and a simple character, which made him welcome wherever he went, and particularly welcome to Emilia, on whom he doted—with a most generous passion, it is certain, for it was totally without hope, and, consequently, escaped the anguished alternations of despair. He worshiped, indeed, rather than loved; for love without hope is, it is said by the learned in such matters, an impossibility. To serve her even in the smallest thing was the purpose of his life; to attend her on horseback, to dance with her at a county ball, to dine at Mr. Wyndham's and have to call afterwards, his principal pleasures. It must, however, be added, that he kept up his health and spirits by a deep devotion to the sports of the field, which second passion, no doubt, assisted to maintain the first in rational order.

Everybody had been seated at least half an hour, and Mr. Wyndham was beginning to grow very fidgetty and to look at his watch, before the splendid coach and four, with servants attending on horseback, was seen driving up the approach, and Sir Thomas, Lady Maria, and Miss Hesketh, were announced.

You who live in the rich harvest of knights of all descriptions, and for all reasons, and baronets without number—the happy result of our victories both in arms and commerce, and of the rapid progress of our wealth and population—think very little now-a-days, I dare say, of a *Sir*; but years ago it was a very different thing, and Sir Thomas was honoured accordingly. He was, moreover, a man of very good family, and one of the oldest baronets in England; and Lady Maria was the daughter of the Earl of Bandon, and a person of the first fashion.

She was a very showy woman, still young, and with pretensions to be still younger. She came in with a slip-slop, fine-lady air, dressed in the extreme of the mode, with shoulders most elaborately displayed—her dress expensive, in every point, to the very highest degree—hanging on the arm of her tall, pompous-looking husband, both evidently thinking they were doing Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham a prodigious favour by thus accepting their hospitality.

Their slender, elegant, and most exquisitely beautiful daughter

slipped into the room negligently after them; and, while the elders received the elders with due form and ceremony, Emilia came forward to receive her friend, and carry her away to the window where she had before been sitting.

She was scarcely fifteen, and had that sweet, shy, wild, fawn-like look in her beautiful eyes, that is to me the loveliest expression in the world. Her figure was not fully formed, but it was of an exquisite delicacy and symmetry; and her dress, the perfection of good taste and simplicity, added fresh charms to her appearance.

She looked enchanted to see her friend again, and continued to hold her hand, and to cling to her, as she had so often done in school days, as to the kindest and most courageous of mammas and protectors.

The innocent and unsuspecting Emilia presented her to Colonel Lenox with a look of pride and a little malicious smile of triumph, as much as to say, "Is she not enchanting?"

He bowed at the introduction, and continued leaning with his back to the side of the window, and talking very pleasantly to the young ladies seated before him.

The last who stole in was Mr. Danby.

He came in quietly, answered a few words addressed to him by Mrs. Wyndham, and then, gliding to a position behind Miss Wyndham's chair, though at some little distance from her, listened, with a grave smile, to all the idle talk that was going on between her, the Colonel, Mr. Wilcox, and Miss Hesketh.

It was an event in Mr. Danby's life; and, therefore, trifling as it may appear, should be recorded here, that, when dinner was announced and the proper personages disposed of, the Colonel was content to take out Miss Hesketh, and Emilia was consigned to Mr. Danby; Mr. Wilcox's ready arm being rejected, in submission to maternal authority.

The soft, fair hand, with braceleted wrists and delicate white glove, rests on Mr. Danby's somewhat rusty coat sleeves, and he looks down upon it with the sort of enthusiastic admiration with which a Catholic might be supposed to regard his virgin saint. He dared not press that lovely arm to his heart, which was beating fast with emotion, and demanding, as it were, that one ineffable indulgence; and so great was his confusion that he could hardly speak; but he was in a rapture of ecstasy which cannot even be imagined by people who lead the every-day life of society. I will not attempt to paint it—it was like that of one transported to the seventh heaven.

He was to sit by her at dinner—close by her the whole time; he was to take wine with her, he was to talk to her; and it was her duty to talk to him, and very sweetly she performed the duty; for, conscious that he was a little looked down upon by the rest of the party, her generous nature was all alive, and she paid him every sort of attention in her power.

She found him, as she had found him before, sensible and agreeable,—one whose conversation seemed to excite and raise

the tone of her mind. Her manner was brief,—slightly sarcastic; but his observations were acute and his views penetrating.

In the mean time, how did the Colonel get on with his beautiful companion?

Emilia could not help glancing every now and then to that side of the table on which they were seated. He was looking charming, as he always did when he chose, and in his pleasantest manner, seemed intent upon the subject he was talking of. She was looking down, but seemed to colour every now and then with pleasure at what he said. He would leave off and resume his dinner, and then appear to return to the subject with fresh animation. And yet Emilia did not feel jealous. She was of a confiding nature; so truthful herself, that she never doubted the truth of others: he had hinted too many affectionate things to make her doubt of his affection, and she had not yet learned to distinguish between affection and love.

The dinner and dessert, with all their pomp and fuss, are over; the ladies leave the room, pass through the windows of the dining-room, and walk out upon the grass-plots.

Lady Maria is extremely condescending and good-humoured, and is discussing dress, fashions, furniture, and operas, to the wearied Mrs. Wyndham, who hates company, and whose breaking health renders it very difficult and painful for her to exert herself long, or, in other words, to do what she does not like.

When the gentlemen join them, she has, however, some relief. It is plain Lady Maria's eye has singled out Colonel Lenox as by far the handsomest and most charming man of the group, and she has engaged him in conversation, and is laughing and flirting with him in a very forward and affected manner.

The Colonel is far too much of a man of the world not to respond to this; and the two young ladies are left to the other young gentlemen, who, in an awkward sort of manner, are paying their devoirs.

The elder gentlemen, among whom must be classed Mr. Danby, are talking business and politics.

They walked about till they were all tired, and then they came in to tea; the piano-forte was opened, and the different young ladies were requested to play and sing.

Colonel Lenox was passionately fond of music, and he seemed quite enchanted at a duet which the two girls had learned at school, and now were singing together; Miss Hesketh, with a voice sweet, warbling, and clear as a nightingale, Emilia in a rich tenor. He sat listening in a sort of ecstasy.

Mr. Danby stood alone in a corner of the room, looking, as Emilia thought, very desolate.

She went up to him.

"Do you like music, Mr. Danby?"

"I don't know one note from another."

"I don't know that *knowledge* is exactly necessary—the ear is pleased without knowing why."

"To me it is quite an unintelligible jingle of sounds, and a horrid waste of time that might be so much better employed."

"Better employed in such a meeting as this!"

"I shall be gone," he said, looking at his watch, "in less than half an hour; and I shall never, never behold Miss Wyndham again; and she need not wonder that I begrudged the precious moments wasted upon stuff such as that, who have spent the day as I have. It will be marked with a white stone in my life, Miss Wyndham. But the bright light only deepens the shadows," he said, as he turned away, and went to speak to her farther. He was in conversation with him for a few moments, and then it was time to go.

He took leave of Mrs. Wyndham, then approached the place where Emilia was standing. He intended merely to bow gravely, but she held out her hand; he took it, held it a moment—gazed as if he would have longed to kneel, raise it to his lips, and worship it—pressed it gently, but firmly—let it fall—turned away.

And returned to his life of solitude and law.

CHAPTER IV.

A wise man maketh more opportunities than he finds.—BACON.

"PRETTY?—Yes, really very pretty, beautiful! A nice sort of a little thing, but the mother is perfectly odious! I never saw such a disgusting piece of affectation in my life. If she were not Lady Maria—and of course Lady Maria is a woman of fashion—I should have called her a vulgar, forward, bold woman, endeavouring to pass herself off for young."

Such—as Mrs. Wyndham smiled with pleasure at the justice of her own observations—were Colonel Lenox's opinions of those with whom he had spent the day.

"Well," said Emilia, "I am quite disappointed. I thought you would have been enchanted with Lisa; I am sure you seemed so at dinner."

He looked at her pleasantly, and said—

"I am glad you thought it worth while to look at us. Perhaps you would like to know what we were talking about—of the subject that interests me the most of any in the world, but that certainly is not Miss Hesketh. Ah, Emilia!" and he took her hand.

The door opened, and a servant entered—letters—and, before he left the room, Mr. Wyndham came in very much fussed and very angry, because the letter-bag had been opened by some one in his absence.

"And a very great liberty it was, and he would not put up with such things," &c.

At which Colonel Lenox rose up to escape, as he always en-

deavoured to do upon such occasions, carrying his letters out of the room. An hour afterwards, he was hunting Miss Wyndham all over the house; but Miss Wyndham had driven out with her father and mother.

Colonel Lenox was in a paroxysm of vexation and impatience. Where could they be gone to? When would they return? The first coach—when would it leave the village below? At four o'clock.

At half-past three they returned. There was time but for hasty and brief explanations; he was summoned to join his regiment; the transport by which he was to sail was waiting at Portsmouth; he must depart immediately; his servant had packed up all his things; he must go by the four o'clock coach.

He looked in a sort of imploring agony at Mrs. Wyndham; but her husband was fidgeting her about some trifle or another, and she could not give him a moment's attention. Emilia stood at the window, looking out; her colour high, and scarcely venturing to trust her voice to speak. But all this was passing, alas! not in the large saloon, but in the small breakfast parlour, where not a sentence could be spoken but what must be overheard.

On such small links does the chain of human life depend. His servant entered.

"No time to be lost, sir; the coach is coming up the village."

He throws his coat over his arm—grasps the hands of the mother and the daughter—and with a hasty, choking "God bless you all!" rushes from the apartment, runs down the hill, and is lost to sight.

He sailed the next day for Lisbon.

Mrs. Wyndham watched every post for the first few days with an anxiety almost intolerable; but no post brought what she fondly expected.

Emilia was without any such anticipations. Such a vast event as a proposal of marriage was beyond the sphere of her expectations. She was certain he loved her; that was enough—she was content: and, after the first pangs of parting were over, recovered her cheerful spirits, returned to her employments and her mother's society, and lived upon the newspapers and intelligence from Spain.

I have not succeeded in my endeavour, I fear. I have but ill described any one of the persons with whom I wish to make you acquainted. It is very disagreeable to me to be engaged in delineating unamiable and imperfect characters; it is painful to live the time over again with them; it is painful to observe how the faults and failings of the weak and ill-disciplined even when not actually vicious—cloud over and obscure the destiny of those blessed and better spirits, apparently by tempers and their talents intended for a far happier lot.

Yet of what is the moral of real life composed, save of reflections drawn from such pictures—either presented by our experience or by the experience of others!

But, does any one ever draw such reflections? Is any one really the better even for his own experience? How far less is his chance of improvement from that of others?

It is a disheartening question. And yet, as the ancient Jews were required to enforce their law, "line upon line and precept upon precept," upon the minds of their children, it is impossible not to hope and to believe that some good influences will arise, and some good impressions remain, from the delineation of the faults to be avoided and the virtues to be cherished in this life.

Human nature is careless and unthinking rather than callous—undisciplined and uncivilised rather than radically bad; and happiness is trifled and slatterned away rather by unthinking negligence with regard to the wants and feelings of others than by deliberate evil purpose. The latter indeed is, I believe, a very rare occurrence in every-day life; it is the subject-matter of the dark and tragic passages of the human story—the other, to use the French expression, *coudre les rues*—it is all but universal; and, indeed, it requires a very careful education from others, and a sedulous self-education on our own part, to arrive at those kind benevolent daily habits which make the sum of life.

There is, indeed, as St. Paul says, "a more excellent way," than even reflection or mental self-discipline—there is the simple, Christian "love," which, in itself, at once forms the character to all that is kind, tender, and good. But, alas! for that divine innocence of love, where shall we find it? Among the jarring creeds, the irritating contentions, the censures, the condemnations, the notes in our brothers' eyes, that so much offend us? Amid the bigotries, the superstitions, the divisions, and all the thousand evils, under fair names, that mar the divine image of the Christian man, and destroy the divine unity of the universal church. Where, alas!

But I will not indulge my love of reflecting. I will only point out to you—fearing that the way I have told my story may not have been sufficiently animated to do so effectively—the evil that a weak understanding, jealous of authority, united to a thoughtless and indifferent rather than to a really ill-natured temper, was able to produce.

"We lions are no painters," may be said by women: the best of them are most often not painters. It is no very difficult matter to draw a Mrs. Caudle, and publish her in a popular journal; and with such success, that she shall become a by-word in families, and serve as an additional reason for that rudeness and incivility, that negligent contempt, with which too many Englishmen still think it their prerogative, as men and truce-born Britons, to treat their wives.

The reverse of the picture is rather pathetic than comical, and, therefore, far less interesting to the mass of our population, who seem to care neither for truth, nor sense, nor feeling, so they can but be made to laugh. The tears of a sensitive and tender-hearted creature over the whims, the follies, perhaps

the excesses, vices, and extravagances of the being she cannot but love—for all women love their husbands—are easily resolved into pettishness or affectation. It is very much more amusing so to consider it, and certainly not a little agreeable to be able to dispense with all attention to other people's feelings, by being assured that if they feel pain when they are wounded it is their own fault.

Mrs. Wyndham's life had been the sacrifice to a short-sighted woman's folly. She had, sensible woman as she was, been captivated by Mr. Wyndham's handsome person, gay and pleasing manners, and intense and passionate devotion to herself.

She was very young when she committed the folly of marrying him; that is all we can say in her behalf. She found herself the idol of a day, and, when the short-lived passion was over, there was neither friendship, nor affection, nor confidence, to replace it. Of friendship, such a man as Mr. Wyndham is evidently incapable; that desecrated name belongs only to the attachments of the finer spirits—the rare and excellent among our race. A combination of qualities, on both sides, is necessary to produce that precious and inestimable sentiment. This was not to be expected. Of real, sincere affection, many men are not capable; they have, indeed, a sort of attachment to the things they live among, the people who fill their house and family; that is, they do not very well like to do without them, when they have been accustomed to their presence: but that is all. Take them away, and replace them by something, or some person else, and you soon learn to measure the strength of attachment in the ordinary human heart. As for confidence, that is not the attribute of a little mind, especially if tinged with jealousy of a mind more enlarged and noble than itself: it loves to keep its own frivolous plans and ideas a secret, for there seems, indeed, a sort of instinctive dread on the part of folly to come into contact with wisdom.

Rely upon it, that the man who loves those higher in the scale of intellect than himself is a hero undisclosed by circumstances. Folly hates wisdom, even the gentlest wisdom.

I will not say, however, that Mrs. Wyndham's was always the *very* gentlest wisdom, for she was of a high and somewhat impatient temper, and most noble, spirited, and honourable. She really could not stoop to flatter and to coax Mr. Wyndham. She was so much too good for him, that even her fine and generous qualities were actually in her way. Had she but possessed some portion of his own littleness, undoubtedly she would have managed him much better.

Her worst anxiety—because it was one of which nothing could disguise the importance—was upon the subject of his affairs. She could bear with his peevishness, she could endure his tediousness, she could manage to get along, as the saying is; but her suspicion that he was every year spending more than his income, the impossibility to obtain the least certainty as to what money he ought to spend, or as to what money he actually

did spend—the vexation of seeing him duped by tradesmen with whom he had to do—imposed upon by every pretender who wanted a job, let him be picture-cleaner, landscape-gardener, horse-breaker, furnishing-professor, or any other of those innumerable leeches that prey upon facile men of property—was secretly undermining her health and spirits.

The hope held out by Colonel Lenox's attentions to Emilia, that her daughter might, by a marriage with a man of manly temper—whom she saw was liked only too well—escape the evils which must sooner or later break upon them, was now disappointed.

Mrs. Wyndham knew the world better than Emilia did; she knew how evanescent a thing is a man's liking, or even love; how soon, in new scenes and among new faces, he forgets the heart which, with such constancy and generous faith, clings to him alone. She felt that if the force of a passion be not sufficient to drive a man to that last decisive step which brings him out of the land of dreamy feeling into the regions of stern reality, it serves but to deceive the fond, trusting being, whose affection is far too deep and serious even to suspect the idle, unreal thing which love is too often with men—that the woman plays her life against the man's least serious hours—that, in short, if a man does not link himself by a proposal, the rest is as nothing.

So long as they were together, this important step might any day be taken—even when they were parted, his feelings might have had sufficient force to urge him to it. It was now plain they had not.

The wise mother drew her own conclusions; and her chief anxiety now became to eradicate by degrees all expectation, and, if possible, erase the image itself, from the ardent and enthusiastic heart of her daughter.

The task was more difficult than she had imagined. Emilia loved Colonel Lenox. She had loved him from a child—before she knew what love was, he had been the object of that sort of idolatrous admiration with which some young men have been known to inspire quite little girls, when they have condescended to take notice of them. Colonel Lenox had always been excessively fond of and kind to his little cousin; and he never suspected the impression his good-natured attentions were making upon her childish heart.

Her love for him was so entirely a part of her being, that she did not seem to be aware of its force or its nature; and she had been for so many years accustomed to delight in his society, and to feel very sad and sorry when he went away, that the present parting, and the subsequent gloom and dulness, only appeared to her as a matter of course. She felt, without even saying so to herself, that nothing could divide them ultimately; and she looked forward into life, as though it were to be passed either with him, or in thinking of and being devoted to him.

To be often separated from each other was part of his destiny

as a soldier; but in her dreams she was, some time or other, to be his companion,—to follow him through hardships and dangers, to nurse him when wounded, to work for him in his tent, to prepare his meals when faint, his bed when weary; to be his guardian angel of comfort, and his faithful devoted slave. The pictures which her fancy drew were those of a felicity too exquisite for words. There is something in woman that seems born for the knapsack.

And what were his feelings? They are more difficult for me to describe.

He loved Emilia very dearly, and never saw any woman that he could put the least in comparison with her; but he did not particularly desire to be married. He had not much fortune besides his profession, and he had a very particular horror of squalling nurseries, rough meals, a desecrated, busy wife, and all those appendages to marriage in rather confined circumstances, which he had not quite love enough, perhaps not nobility enough, in his temper to glorify. He was, indeed, at present quite in love with his profession, and thought very much more of his campaigns against Soul than of his progress in any young lady's heart.

He, like Emilia, seemed to take it for granted that they were to pass their lives together; and he was always excessively annoyed, excessively jealous, and felt himself exceedingly injured, if any man presumed to appear to admire or appropriate her.

So he had come and gone. On this last parting his feelings, however, had been more decided, the pain he felt at parting much more severe, and the desire to fix his fate so strong, that, had not a chain of trifling circumstances forbidden, I believe he would not have left the house without an explanation.

Once gone, however, and that explanation not made, he did not feel inclined to precipitate it by a letter. He preferred the pleasure of making it in person; and he said to himself that it was scarcely proper, indeed, to ask her to form an indefinite engagement, when he could for the moment ask for nothing else.

He felt as secure as she did what the end of the story was to be: and so the matter remained.

CHAPTER V.

*Io vengo e vado ogni giorno,
Ma tu andrai, senza ritorno.*

Now the scene changes.

We have had some short scenes of love: we have now to do with death.

Death and love!—Human history!

The first person whose departure threw the Wyndhams into mourning was that aunt whom Emilia mentioned slightly at

the beginning of her history as having been tiresome and exacting. She was, in fact, a very tiresome woman; one who required every possible sacrifice of every other person's comfort, time, health, and welfare, to be made to her; never troubling herself to weigh her own life's value against that of those whose time, health, and even life, she would have been ready to demand.

She died, and everybody went into deep mourning; and the world was the loser only of one tiresome, selfish, and unamiable person.

The mother of Colonel Lenox had been dead some time; this last death, of Lady Montague, seemed rather to loosen the ties which united him to Mr. Wyndham's family. He used to write to his rich aunt with considerable regularity; a letter now and then to Mrs. Wyndham was all the news they got of him now. He was no great writer; and his movements were so uncertain, that what letters he did write came very irregularly.

Whenever they arrived, however, they were certain to be productive of very great pleasure both to mother and daughter. There was always a something—a word, a sentence—in some part or other of these lively, narrative letters, which spoke of a heart that dwelt alone with them—reassured the mother's anxiety, and confirmed the daughter in her happy confidence.

Mrs. Wyndham did not trouble herself about the difficulties on the score of money matters which seemed to have perplexed Colonel Lenox; his father, who lived in a remote part of Scotland, she knew to be a man of good estate. Colonel Lenox was his only son, and there seemed no probability of the father marrying again. Even if he should, and should have in his old age a new family of children, that might diminish, but would not seriously impair, Colonel Lenox's fortune or expectations; for the custom of his country, and all the prejudices of his odd-tempered father, would forbid the idea of dividing the landed estate, far less alienating it from his eldest son.

His income at present was small, for his father was of a penurious temper. But little would Mrs. Wyndham have cared to expose her daughter to the difficulties arising from a slender income during the first years of marriage. With her views of life, such a call for wholesome exertion would have appeared rather an advantage than the contrary. And I think she would have liked Colonel Lenox somewhat less, could she have known the sort of light in which he regarded it.

She would have considered it as a proof of some deficiency in that genuine independence, and true nobility of spirit, which she valued more than anything in the world, to have been so fearful of these paltry disagreeablenesses, when put in contrast with satisfied love and sincere friendship.

But Colonel Lenox was no paragon of perfection. He had many very fine and estimable qualities, but he had many faults and many weaknesses; and he was—like the majority of his sex—almost entirely without those habits of self-examination

and self-discipline which can alone improve and perfect a character, and in which species of duty men are too often lamentably deficient.

But now we must enter a large and handsome bedchamber, which is rendered twilight by the heavy curtains that fall over the windows. The room is most comfortably and beautifully furnished and carpeted, and presents every appearance of luxury. A large bed is on one side of it, the curtains of which are all drawn but one. Stillness pervades the apartment—you might hear a pin drop.

A pale and attenuated countenance appears above the bed-clothes, the figure raised some little with pillows; the breath comes slow, heavy, and with some difficulty; one hand grasps that of her daughter, who is sitting by the bedside.

"My dearest child," the sick and sinking mother is saying, "it cannot be—such feelings as mine rarely deceive. It is my turn now to do that which we have all sooner or later to do—resign my being to Him who gave it, and pass into that other, and, I humbly trust, better world."

Emilia answered by her tears.

"You must not weep, my fondly loved one! Look steadily forward, treasured darling of my soul! A few years, and my sweet Emilia will follow me; and, trust this heart, my angel, we shall meet again. Yes, dearest and sweetest girl, the friendship which it has been my rare and inestimable lot to enjoy with you—precious child of my bosom!—shall not be dissolved, though all else be dissolved. He who knit the tie will not sever it eternally. Dear, loved, and valued Emilia! your poor mother shall find you again."

"Ah, mamma!" she exclaimed, pressing her hand tenderly.

"I have loved you *passionately*," said the dying mother; "but the All-Merciful has been pleased to look with pity upon my weakness. If this heart, in its desolation, has erected you into an idol, His pity has not chastised me too severely. He has not suffered me to be wounded through you. Anxious for your fate—too anxious—I may have been; but *my* heart has never felt the wound so many hearts are doomed to endure. Your love—your tenderness—your duty—have even exceeded mine. And had I not, on my knees, every morning and evening of my life, blessed and praised the Giver for this gift, I should now be troubled with the remorse of ingratitude—but of *that* sin I am not guilty. I have prized the treasure as it deserved.—Good, dutiful, affectionate Emilia! give your poor mother one more of those kind, tender, childlike kisses, and let her bless thee. Bless her, O Father!"

Her eyes were turned up with an expression of almost ecstatic thoughtfulness and devotion, as Emilia, her heart filled with sweet and bitter feelings, bent over the mother she loved so dearly, and kissed her.

Even in moments such as these Mrs. Wyndham soon recovered her composure. She was very little in the habit of allowing herself to yield to feeling; and this was one reason, perhaps, for the great affection she inspired in those few who really appreciated and loved her.

"I have been thinking much," she pursued, after a little pause, "over my past life, endeavouring to trace its history in its causes. I have been asking myself why I have been so little happy, and whether it was the fault of others or my own. To speak without affectation, I do not think it *has* been my own fault—nor, properly speaking, the fault of others; it has been that the circumstances in which I have been placed have been, I should have said, had I been called upon to judge, just exactly those least calculated to make me happy.—All other creatures seem placed in the sphere in which they are best calculated to enjoy existence, to flourish, and to live. Why has it not been so with me?

—"Is my case peculiar? or is it the general lot? Human life, human society," she continued, "is a strange mystery; but, as some one justly remarked, 'We must wait the *dénouement* before we judge of the story.'—But, indeed, my precious Emilia, I am wasting the little breath that is left me. My dear, dear child! my heart is dwelling upon your probable fate. My love! my poet! as I have fondly called you, what is before you?"

Her countenance became excessively agitated, even livid; tears, in spite of all her efforts, brimmed over her eyes, and her mouth was convulsed with the endeavour to suppress her emotion.

"My dear, dear mamma!" said Emilia, tenderly, "do not—do not distress yourself about me. I am young, healthy, and have a stout heart and spirit. I know I must lose you"—here her voice trembled—"but you have taught me where to find the Father of us both. He will not forsake your orphan child. Yet this thing, dearest mother—very often have I seen you thus agitated and distressed when you have looked at me, as if some very fearful and terrible tale were in store for me—let me beg of you, dearest mother, to tell me the worst you anticipate."

"I am ashamed—I ought to be ashamed," said the mother, resuming her composure. "I do not know why I dread that so intensely for you which I have always felt that I could meet courageously myself. But that is a fearful word—**RUIN!**"

Emilia started.

The mother said truly—that *is* a fearful word for any ears.

"My child! my child!" cried the mother, very much distressed. "Do not look so pale! Where is your courage, my Emilia?"

Emilia recovered herself, but she looked very pale.

"I ought to be glad," she said, in a low voice, "and I am

glad, that this hideous thing will not involve you; you will escape it, my friend, my mother—but I was terrified, at the moment, at the thought of meeting it by myself.”

“Ah, that is it! that is it!” said the mother, shaking her head bitterly. “That is it! I am taken away, and cannot share the suffering with you,” and she wept for some moments with a bitterness quite unusual with her. “If it had but pleased *Him* to let me stay with you, ah! never, never should you have felt a pang while your poor mother could have been there to receive it for you. But I am very weak—my business is to prepare you as best I may.—My love, I set you a very bad example,” said she, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring to smile; “I hope you will have more courage for yourself than your poor mother has for you.”

“Depend upon it, dear mother, I will. Best and kindest of mothers!” said Emilia, kissing her hand fondly, “how much have you taught me! how much have you endeavoured to strengthen my mind! I bless God I have been able, in some degree, young as I am, to appreciate all the love that dictated your cares to school, direct, and form me. Indeed, my mother, it has not all been thrown away.—If I understand what that terrible word *ruin* means, it means that I must work for my living; and I am sure I am very ready to do so. Why should I be privileged? Why should I not do that which so many, far better than I, are obliged to do every day? Dear mother, cheer up; this is no such very dreadful thing.”

The mother smiled sadly, yet with admiration, at the generous, open countenance—the truthful, healthy sincerity in that glistening eye. And the hideous form of even *ruin* began to be less appalling to her imagination.

She thought of the power of goodness and of truth, even in this dark world; of the final triumph of the right, however long delayed, even till faith almost fail. She thought there was nothing too hard to be achieved by such a temper and so brave a young heart.

“Thank you, my dearest love,” said she, more cheerfully; “you have, indeed, comforted me very much; but—”

“Let us say no more of it, sweet mother. What you would tell me is only a confirmation of my own suspicions. I have long seen your anxiety; I knew you would not be anxious without good cause. I have seen other things—I have been expecting some time that things could not go on in this way for ever.”

“My death, I fear,” said Mrs. Wyndham, “will precipitate the catastrophe, and I fear the confusion will be only the greater because I shall no longer be there to offer my assistance, such as it is, to your poor father. He seems, my dear, not to be quite equal to the entanglements and embarrassments with which he is beginning to be aware that he is surrounded. He has applied to me lately for assistance, in a way he has not before been accustomed to do.—Many men dislike to trouble

their wives upon the subject of their affairs.—It is too late for *me* now to be of any service.”

“There would have been a provision for you, my Emilia,” she now continued, lowering her voice, which, in spite of her efforts, grew very husky, “if, unfortunately, it had not been decided by a very eminent legal man, that there was a flaw in our marriage settlement, and that it was—good for nothing.”

Her hands fell upon the bed.

“There was that little dyke, as I thought!” she cried, raising and clasping her hands, “against the impending destruction! It has given way—and the waters are gone over my soul—

“There is nothing!—absolutely nothing secure!—not the slightest thing! The whole is unstable as the wind. When the earthquake rocks under the feet, the awful feeling is, that the solid world is fluctuating like the fleeting waters.—So it is now with me! I cannot fix my heart upon one earthly foundation.”

“There is a better foundation, mother, you have taught me, than that,” said the young girl, steadily. “Suffer me, mother, this once—There is the Rock of Ages!”

The poor mother again gazed upon her with a sort of rapturous comfort.

“Yes, yes, my child! you do well. I have lost my faith, my confidence. Oh, child! child! I am indeed a poor, weak coward—but is it not for thee? All the lovely dawn of thy most lovely life and prospects destroyed! All thy little pretty plans!—all thy sweet hopes!”

Emilia's face was crimsoned with a deep blush, as she bent down her head, and said, in a low voice—

“Not so—he will never forsake me because I am poor.”

The mother smothered a sigh. She would have given the universe to have shared upon this subject in the confidence of her daughter. She could not—she had seen too much of the world.

Had they but been pledged—she knew his honourable soul well—not all the considerations upon earth could have divided them; nor would she ever have felt, or he have felt, a change. But here, alas! was no engagement, no pledge of honour, nothing even said by which a man of the nicest honour could think himself bound. The world, his father, distance, time, accident—everything, she felt, would be against her. She could not—indeed she felt it would not be right to disturb her daughter's confidence by her own melancholy forebodings; upon that subject, therefore, she did not touch again.

After a little time they began to talk seriously of what was best to be done, and of the present state of affairs.

Mrs. Wyndham communicated to her daughter her fears that Mr. Wyndham had added to his entanglements by putting himself into the hands of a very low and dishonest practitioner of the law, who had been raising money for him in the most un-

principled and imprudent manner; and supplying him with it in a way which had greatly added to his habits of profusion—habits which nothing but necessity could check.

"I fear," she said, "that Mr. Rile has so worked himself up into your father's affairs, that he is the master of everything, and holds all of us in his power. It is the idea of your father and you, defenceless as you are," she said, while a sort of spasm contracted her face, "being left in the hands of an unprincipled wretch like this, which terrifies me so dreadfully. Simple poverty!—To beg your bread even! But it is this dreadful intricacy of social ruin!

"It was not till this morning," she continued, after a little pause, "that I discovered the whole truth. I had flattered myself into a sort of security that things could not be irretrievably bad, by the idea that Mr. Danby was the man who conducted your father's legal business. He was evidently a man of sense, and, I thought, of honour. It turns out that he has not been lately consulted. Your father's necessities, I fear, led to the use of means to which Mr. Danby would not lend his countenance. You know your father is not very patient under opposition. I have reason to fear that he quarrelled with Mr. Danby, and withdrew his confidence from him."

Emilia looked perplexed and sorry. This was a form of evil she had not anticipated. She began to form some faint conception of the net of entanglement in which the dreadful meshes of the law may be made to enwrap the unwary. A disagreeable, painful, nightmare sort of feeling of embarrassment, succeeded to her first, straightforward, hopeful security that she could earn her own bread.

"There is my uncle," she said, at last, in a hesitating voice. But it was plain that she had little hope from him.

"Your uncle, my love," said Mrs. Wyndham, "is not a very good man of business. I do not think you will do much by any application to him; he and your father do not, you know, agree very well together. The only person in the world in whom I can place any confidence is, after all, Mr. Danby. He is, it is true, almost a perfect stranger to both of us; but, from what little I saw of him, I felt an instinctive, rather than a reasonable feeling, that he was one in whom you might place confidence. Having no evidence to guide us, we must trust to our instincts. He is the only person in the world to whom I can advise you to apply."

"I apply!" said the daughter, amazed.

"My dear love, when I am gone you will have," said the mother, lowering her voice, "a new and strange task imposed upon you. You must guide those who naturally should guide you. In this moment of extremity it may be forgiven to me to speak openly, without that reverence ever due to the father of my child. You will find his understanding has been considerably weakened of late—if you do not influence him, others will. You must not let this be the case, Emilia—for his sake,

still more than for your own; for his credit, his salvation from misery and disgrace—that worst of misery—you must become the mistress of his mind, my Emilia. He loves you and esteems you—this will not be difficult. When I used the word, you must apply, it was for brevity's sake—my time is short. I should have said, influence your father to apply.”

Emilia again kissed her mother's hand in silence: the pledge was received and acknowledged by a confiding pressure. Mrs. Wyndham seemed relieved, now she had said so much. She was exhausted, and she turned, or rather was turned by the tender hands of her daughter, for she could scarcely move herself; and she dozed or slept a little.

Emilia continued to sit by the bedside.

It was late in the autumn. The wind was roaring round the house; the rain and sleet at intervals beating against the windows; all was gloomy without; the evening had drawn on, and the room was darkening. The fire threw its dim and fitful gleams upon the ceiling and the bed; and now and then, a falling cinder was the only sound heard within the apartment. The slight breathing of Mrs. Wyndham might likewise be faintly heard. All else was still.

She sat, her eyes fixed upon the fire, in a sort of dreamy reverie, revolving all she had heard. She was astonished, she was grieved, but she did not feel terrified. There was something in her young heart that rather rejoiced in difficulty; something brave and generous, that almost panted to meet danger. The idea of her father consigned to her care, of shielding him under, perhaps rescuing him from, his present difficulties, was consoling; it was an object worthy of that heart, so desolate before at the idea of parting with that dear mother, so long the object and reward of every care.

She was not appalled at the confusion and disorder which she seemed called upon to disentangle. She felt that she should accomplish the task; and then there was an image—a dear, treasured, cherished image of one, with his sensible, manly, and truthful tones, and that smile of approbation, never, never to be forgotten—who looked upon her and blessed her, and told her she had done wisely and well, and that he loved and esteemed her for it.

And the roar of the night wind, and the pelting of the rain, was as loud music to her ear.

CHAPTER VI.

There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,

In that word, death; no words can that woe sound.—ROMEO AND JULIET.

WHEN Emilia met her father that day at dinner, she could not help looking upon him in a quite different manner from what she had ever done before, with a mixture of tenderness, curiosity, and interest quite new.

She felt something of the tenderness inspired by helplessness that is to be dependent upon us; of interest, as for one who would soon be called upon to suffer much; of curiosity, to know how far he appeared sensible of his own situation, and how far he was preparing himself for it.

The meal was a melancholy and silent one, as usual; it had been so ever since Mrs. Wyndham had been confined to her room. Mr. Wyndham, who had never seemed to have loved or valued his wife as she deserved during her days of health and vigour, and who had never troubled himself to provide for her happiness, or to smooth and arrest those first symptoms of decay, when tenderness and care might have availed to arrest them—now that he found himself in danger of losing her altogether, seemed suddenly aware of her value, and was seized with dismay and despair. So jealous as he had been of the superiority of her understanding when it could have availed him, now that he was to be deprived of its assistance, he felt like one suddenly robbed of his whole stay and support.

He had been, unacknowledged by himself, in the constant habit of resting upon her; he had secretly cherished a sort of feeling that she would prevent his ever making any very grievous mistakes, or falling entirely into the power of other men; that her talents and energy would finally triumph over every difficulty with which he might be embarrassed, and finally liberate him from every entanglement into which he might fall.

This reliance, without the attendant confidence, had really been the cause of additional mischief. The high opinion he entertained in secret of his wife's powers had rendered him only more hasty, imprudent, and unwary, than he might otherwise have been; whilst his dread of her interference, as I have said, entirely prevented that truth and confidence in his dealings with her which might have enabled her in time to judge of and to extricate him from the impending danger. He was now as miserable as it is in the power of a weak, inconsistent character to be; for those who have no persistence of character have no persistence even in their grief. Like children, they are diverted from the contemplation by the slightest circumstance; like some children, only to continue their groans and lamentations when that circumstance is removed.

Mr. Wyndham was as weak and as selfish in his grief as he had been in everything else. His daughter had already found that she must seek neither for support nor comfort from him.

His lamentations would have been wearisome and depressing to excess, had not Emilia loved her mother with such enthusiasm, that she was content to see her lamented, whatever the manner; and she loved her father the better for his very weakness.

"Well, my dear," he began, with a heavy sigh, as they sat down to dinner, "how did you leave your poor mother? How is she now?"

"She is a little more comfortable, I think, sir, this afternoon; she has been dozing, and is refreshed by it."

"Well, what will you take her up?"

"Mrs. Simpson has made her tea, and is taking it up to her. I do not think she would like anything else."

"Now, I don't agree with you at all, Emilia. I am sure you are keeping your mother too low. There is some capital hare-soup; pray take her up a plate. If she would live a little better, I am sure she would feel the good effects of it; but you seem to me to give her nothing."

"Dear papa, if she could but eat it—"

"Nonsense! that is an idea you get into your heads—you people who pretend to understand nursing. The first thing you do is to starve your patients to death. If you will not take it up, I will."

"I will take it up immediately," said Emilia, rising; "I wish she might be persuaded to taste it."

"I will go with you; I dare say I can persuade her. It makes me wretched to see you all going on in this perverse way."

He accompanied his daughter up stairs.

"My dear Mrs. Wyndham," said he, opening the door with a noise that startled the dying woman from a short, uneasy slumber, "here is some capital hare-soup Emilia has brought you, and here is a glass of my finest sherry. Come, let me have the happiness to see you sit up and partake of it; it will do you good."

Mrs. Wyndham opened her heavy eyelids, and looked kindly at him.

"Raise me up, Simpson; let me try it."

The father cast a triumphant and reproachful glance at his daughter, as much as to say, "You see."

Emilia smiled sadly, and presented the soup. Her mother made a faint effort to carry the spoon to her mouth; she turned paler than ever, became very sick, and said softly, shaking her head—

"It won't do; lay me down again."

And she sank upon her pillow, and closed her eyes. Even this little effort was too much for her strength.

Mr. Wyndham looked appalled.

"Give her the wine," said he, presenting the glass; but she faintly asked for a little water, while Mr. Wyndham, struck and disappointed, groaned and retreated down stairs.

Emilia followed him. The dinner was sent untasted away; and, after the servants were dismissed, Mr. Wyndham drew his chair to the fire, and sat rocking himself and groaning at intervals, the picture of melancholy and despair.

"Don't leave me, Emilia," he said, as she was rising to go up to her mother; "you always run away from me, and I am so mournful and so miserable alone. I wish you sometimes would remember me, and not go away so; you never seem to think of my sufferings!"

"Dear sir, if I could do anything to relieve or comfort you—"

"You might as well not always run away so."

"I was only going up to my mother to relieve Simpson, and send her down to her dinner."

"I think it would do Simpson no harm to wait a little. Everybody is made such a fuss about in this house, and taken such good care of, that even a woman-servant cannot be kept from her dinner an hour, forsooth, even for the sake of the master of the family. But do as you like; I see you are in a hurry to get away. I never wish people to sacrifice themselves for me."

Emilia sat down by him.

"Well," he began, after a little time, in a pettish tone, "what is the use of your sitting in this way by me—with not one word to say? you might as well be with your mother as sitting here too sulky to speak, because your poor father asked you to stay with him a little."

Poor Emilia! when her own heart was so dreary and sad, so longing for a kind, comfortable word from somebody!

"You are always so absorbed in your own feelings that you never think of mine. Nobody cares for the poor, bereaved husband. And what am I to do when she is gone?"

And he burst into tears.

"Dear, dear papa! what can I say to you? How can I comfort you?" said Emilia, her tears falling in company with his. "Our loss is irreparable! our grief but too natural! But we must endeavour to bear it as we best can."

"Don't talk to me!" said he, impatiently. "It is very easy to talk; you who have youth and life before you—to talk of bearing it! But what is to become of me?"

"What, indeed, of both of us?" thought she.

He continued to weep, and to strike his hand against his knee in a sort of despair—rejecting all comfort, yet persisting in keeping her by his side, till, at last, anxious to return to her mother, she said—

"Had I not better go up stairs? It is time her medicine should be given, and she may want me."

"Oh, yes! go away, don't stay. Were you staying for my sake? I am sure I want nobody to stay by me. Of course you love best to be with her. There, go away," as she tried to kiss his forehead, for she would not be discouraged; but he turned peevishly from her, and would not let her. "Yes, yes; go to your mother—never think of me."

"Indeed, dearest papa, I do and will think of you, and feel for you very, very much; but my mother, you know, is so helpless and so ill—she demands all my time and care."

"I know it, I know it; that is just what I said. Go away directly; I dare say she wants you. What are you staying for here?"

"I was only staying in the hopes I might say something that might help to comfort you," said she sadly; "but I see that

would be, indeed, in vain. Shall I come and make tea for you, sir, at seven o'clock?"

"Well, yes," said he, wearily; "thank you, Emilia. Yes, come down again, and tell me how she is—I can think of nothing else."

The door opened. "Mr. Rile," said the servant.

Mr. Wyndham started, and seemed to Emilia almost to shudder at the name; he turned pale, then red; then looked up at Emilia in a suspicious manner, and said, hastily,—

"What are you staying for here, Miss Wyndham?—why are you not gone to your mother? No eavesdropping, if you please."

Emilia was leaving the room as Mr. Rile entered it. She just caught the cowering figure of the little mean-looking attorney as she passed him. He made her a very low and obsequious bow, which she returned with a slight courtesy, and went up to her mother's room.

The wind roared around and whistled, shaking the windows of the staircase as she passed, and howling along the passages and around the house. Every now and then, a heavy shower of rain and sleet pattered against the windows. Nothing could be more dreary than the night; nothing more sad and cheerless than her feelings, so desolate and so solitary as she felt, so wearied, so disconsolate. There was something in her father's temper almost insupportably trying to her patience, now that her mother's illness brought her into contact with it.

She felt too low to venture immediately in her mother's room. She took a few turns in the long gallery into which the bedrooms opened, and, approaching the window at the further end of it, looked out. What a dreary prospect is a dark November day in a lonely country-house! and to one "of imagination all compact," as was this hapless young creature, and over whom the aspect of nature exercised so powerful an influence, its effect was particularly depressing.

The indigo-coloured heavy clouds rushed on before the wind—now darkening the landscape, now falling down in floods of rain; while the trees rocked and waved, tossing up their branches and leaves in that wild, lugubrious manner, so desolate and so mournful. Not a living creature was to be seen from the window, which looked over the park and shrubberies; not a sound to be heard but the cheerless moaning of the wind, and the fast patter, from time to time, of the rain.

It was very cold, too; and she shivered, and wrapped her shawl about her, as she stood mournfully reflecting upon the present and the future.

From the mother, dying in the neighbouring room—from the father, at this very moment shut up with the man whom she had just been taught to dread as the author of so much future misery—from the whirling trees and pelting storm before her—her thoughts travelled far away—to him they fled, as it were, for comfort, who was then in that distant land, and from whom, lately, no sign of remembrance had come, but whose image

still dwelt warm in her heart, and was never recurred to without a sweet gleam of hope and encouragement.

Again her memory passed over all those many scenes in which he made a part—the games of her childhood, in which the tall, beautiful youth, in his ensign's uniform, had assisted her with his mischievous frolics—the young captain, who had again visited them when she was a girl of fourteen, and whose conversation and affectionate gallantry had been so inexpressibly flattering and delightful; and the last charming, charming visit!

His conversation, as sitting by her, bending over her, and watching her as she worked or idled over her netting—the delightful descriptions of what he had seen and felt—the still more delightful discussions upon what they had mutually thought and felt—the little pointed compliment—the look of love and approbation—the hasty colour—the impatient push backwards of his chair when her father was peevish or unreasonable, making her feel as if the shield of some generous protector were for ever ready to be thrown over her—the tender reverence of his manner to her mother—her mother's pleasant, almost merry ways with him—all came back in a stream of recollection, cheering, animating, and composing her spirits, till the night wind was heard no more to roar and whistle, the melancholy clouds assumed a lighter hue, and she turned to her mother's room composed and comforted.

Her mother was not asleep, but she seemed more easy and comfortable; she stretched out her hand when she came in, and asked who was come.

"I heard the door-bell ring—who can have come to-night? It seems such a wild night. Not poor Mr. Finch (the apothecary), I hope, upon a most useless errand?"

"No, mamma, it cannot be Mr. Finch, for I know he had to go so far to-day to visit one of his distant patients, that he said, if you could spare him, he would not call in to-night."

"Who was it, then?"

"I believe it was Mr. Rile."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Wyndham, very much alarmed, "on such a night as this! Something must be fearfully the matter. Where is he?"

"He was shown into the dining-room. I met him just as I was going out."

"How did he look?"

"He only made me a very low, cringing bow, and looked, as I thought, a very mean, disagreeable sort of man. Don't distress yourself, sweet mamma. I dare say nothing particularly unpleasant has happened."

There was a knock at the door, and Simpson entered.

"If you please, Miss Wyndham, master is asking for you."

"Good heavens! I had forgotten to tell her of that," said Mrs. Wyndham, suddenly. "Emilia! Emilia!" cried she, endeavouring to raise her voice; but her daughter did not hear her. "Simpson, Simpson! Stop her! I must speak to her!"

"I must speak to her before she goes down to her father!" cried the mother in so much agitation that she could scarcely articulate.

The dining-room door was heard to shut.

"She is gone in to master, ma'am," said Simpson.

"Go down, Simpson. Open the door; say I want to speak with Miss Wyndham for one moment—that I *must* speak to her immediately."

Simpson went down, and soon returned with—

"Master says, Miss Emilia shall come directly; he only wants her for a few moments."

"What were they doing?"

"Master had some papers before him, and Mr. Rile was talking to Miss Emilia, explaining something—A nasty fellow, I hate the sight of him!" (*Aside.*)

"My poor child! Go down again, Simpson," she exclaimed, hardly able to breathe from agitation; "tell her to come to me *instantly*."

Simpson returned with—

"Master is very angry, and asked me how I dared to interrupt him; and told me to open the door again at my peril."

The mother's face was convulsed, as it were, with sudden passion; she started, to the astonishment of Simpson, suddenly to her feet, and stood, like some spectral figure, before the terrified woman. Ordering her in a low, imperative tone to give her her large wrapper, and hastily thrusting her feet into her slippers, she stepped forward, and laid her hand upon the lock of the door.

"For Heaven's sake, madam!" cried her terrified woman-servant, "what are you about? It is as good as your life is worth."

But her mistress shook at the handle of the door with a firm and resolute hand, opened it, and passing along the gallery with a swift and commanding step, descended the stairs, opened the dining-room door, and presented herself, as one risen from the dead, to her astonished husband and shrieking daughter.

She went straight up to the table, and laid her cold, wasted hand upon the attorney's arm.

"What is that, sir?" she said in a voice hollow, but imperative; "what is that paper I saw but this instant in your hand? Give it to me."

"Good lank, madam!" cried the astonished and terrified attorney, "nothing at all. Who could have thought it possible—that you—that you—" trembling and shaking as he looked at her face, scarcely knowing whether she was of the living or the dead; "only—only—a little trifling matter—a—"

"Give it to me this instant, I command you!" in a voice like thunder. "What, dare you refuse the dead? I'll avenge the orphan and the defenceless! I know what that paper contains. Give it to me."

"For Heaven's sake, mother!" cried Emilia, recovering from

the petrified state of astonishment in which she had been standing from the first moment; "for Heaven's sake, mother!"

"Child, what have you been doing? Why did you not come when I sent for you? You have signed a paper. Tell me the truth?" shaking with impatience; "you have signed a paper, and this wretch has got it!"

Again she shook the attorney's arm with violence.

"Give it to me!—give it to me! robber of the orphan! How dare you? Give it to me, or from the grave that is yawning under my feet I will come and snatch the wretched deed out of your most wicked hands. Give it to me!—give it to me!"

"Indeed, indeed, madam—Mr. Wyndham, I appeal to you—Miss Wyndham—I thought this transaction—Very well, sir—if it is against your will, you know the consequences."

"It is the last penny she possesses in the world, that miserable thousand pounds, wretch, that you have just robbed her of! You know it is!—Oh, Wyndham! Wyndham!" she cried, turning piteously to her husband, "could you have the heart to take it all?"

And, sinking into tears, she fell exhausted upon a chair; while the terrified attorney, looking the very picture of sneaking cowardice and cunning, buttoned up his pocket, and was preparing to leave the room.

But she was up again in a moment, inspired, as it were, with supernatural energy.

"Don't go, sir!" cried she, seizing him; "I insist upon your surrendering the deed, and let me tear it into a thousand atoms before your eyes—I *will* have it!" with increasing wildness, "or I will rend it, miserable caittiff, from your heart!—hide it as you may, I *will* have it!"

And she shook the trembling wretch with the force of a giantess.

"My mother! my beloved mother!" again interposed the terrified Emilia, "you will kill yourself. What is all this about? Dearest mother, let me put you back into your bed."

"Did you know," asked she, with flashing eyes, "did they tell you—what you were about to sign?"

"No, no; my father only asked me to sign a paper for him, as a witness, I believe—a matter of no consequence.—Let me put you back in your bed, dear mamma," said Emilia, soothingly.

But she turned upon Mr. Wyndham.

"Could treachery and meanness go thus far?"

Mr. Wyndham—who, during the whole of this scene, had stood like one astonished and out of his senses, his face all manner of colours, and shuffling from one foot to another, turned pale at this attack; and, stammering like the attorney, said in a hesitating sort of way—

"It could not be helped—it was for your sake—"

"For *my* sake!" she almost shrieked.

"Yes, for yours," said he, with more courage; "there would have been an execution in the house this very night. For your sake it was done."

She clasped her hands, gave a low groan, and sank upon the ground. Emilia flew to her. The attorney stole out of the room.

Emilia endeavoured to raise her.

"Mother! mother!—speak to me."

A groan.

"Mother, Mother!—Your Emilia—speak to her."

A faint endeavour to mutter a few words. Emilia bent her ear to the lips.

"Not me," she just faintly articulated.

Two struggling, smothering sighs—the head fell back—and all was over.

It was too true. In the emotion of the last conversation which had passed between Mrs. Wyndham and her daughter—under the confusion of thought and failure of memory which accompanies extreme weakness—Mrs. Wyndham had quite forgotten to mention that one thousand pounds, the legacy of a deceased aunt, remained, amidst the wreck of Mr. Wyndham's fortunes, still in Emilia's power.

Lying upon her bed, while the father and daughter had been sitting so long after dinner, and ruminating, as was her constant practice, upon her daughter's future prospects, this circumstance had suddenly come to her recollection; she reproached herself for having forgotten to mention it, and especially for not having warned her daughter, when upon the subject, to be extremely cautious in setting her name to any paper without being well aware of its contents.

She determined to mention these two things as soon as her daughter should come up stairs, and waited very impatiently until she should appear. When she heard the door-bell ring, the circumstance did not alarm her, as she supposed it to be the apothecary.

Even when Emilia mentioned that it was Mr. Rile, though uneasy at his appearance, as she had but too much reason to be, no apprehension of the real purpose of his visit struck her till Emilia was summoned down stairs; then, by one of those instinctive flashes of almost magnetic light which sometimes visit those in the highest state of nervous debility, the truth had flashed into her mind. She had called her daughter, but her voice seemed arrested by agitation; she struggled for speech, and could not make herself heard.

The refusal on the part of her father, to let her obey the summons by Simpson, increased her agitation. She saw, with horror inexpressible, the last morsel of bread snatched, as it were, from the hands of her unfortunate daughter; and, animated by that undying power of a mother's passionate love,

which has been known to perform such miracles of force and energy, she rose, as one instinct with fresh vigour, from her bed, and, hurrying down stairs, endeavoured, as we have seen in vain, to avert the catastrophe.

Emilia, at the same moment, found herself bereft of her mother, and utterly penniless.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh, you gods!

Is yon despised and ruinous man my lord?
Full of decay and failing?

It was the knowledge of the rapidity with which Mr. Wyndham's affairs were approaching to a conclusion, aggravated by intelligence of the intended proceedings of certain creditors over whom he had no control, which had determined Mr. Rile to ride over in this stormy evening, and secure for himself, if possible, the last solid thousand pounds that remained to this miserable family.

He had worked upon the terrors and the weakness of Mr. Wyndham, by representing an execution as impending which only this thousand pounds could avert.

The horror of the poor victim of his own folly, and the rapacity and villany of those he trusted, at the idea of an execution while his wife lay in this alarming state—of the disgrace with which it would cover him, and the consequences that might ensue—left him neither breath nor time to pause. That it must be done was at once decided upon—there was no alternative; and, sending for Emilia, he betrayed her with his usual cowardice—for he dared not lay the true situation of his affairs before her—into the sacrifice of the last miserable pittance that remained for any of them.

He was now a beggar, and far worse than a beggar: he was overwhelmed with mountains of accumulated debt.

Never was ruin so utterly complete.

Emilia, at this terrible scene, stunned into that calmness which is the result of a last and uttermost despair, rose from the floor where she had been kneeling, as soon as she perceived that her mother had indeed breathed her last. She folded the garments over the lifeless limbs, closed the eyelids, and, ringing the bell with extraordinary composure, desired the butler, who entered, to call her mother's maid, and, with her assistance, to carry the body to the bed.

She stood by, her eyes fixed upon the dreadful spectacle of mortality before her; for the fierce passion which had agitated the last moments of the unhappy mother, still glared with a sort of fixed expression of rage and despair upon the lifeless countenance.

Her cheek was blanched with horror, but not one tear moistened her eyes, till, turning them to one side of the room, she caught the figure of her miserable father—her utterly wretched, miserable, fallen father—who, shrunk as it were to half his natural size—a broken, trembling wretch—stood, or rather crouched, the picture of dismay and shame.

All passions melted in that good and generous heart to ineffable pity at the sight. Like some angel, she stepped up to the wretched man, folded him in her arms, pressed his sinking head to her kind, daughterly bosom, and kissed him fervently, while the tears ran down over her cheeks, and literally bathed his.

He opened his arms, clasped her to his breast, and fainted away.

A short insensibility snatched the unhappy creature for a few instants from the horrors of reflection.

The mother's body was reverently carried up stairs, bedewed by the now ready flowing tears of the pious daughter, mingling with those of the affectionate domestics. The beloved form, with tender hands, was composed upon the bed, covered with a sheet, the chamber of death arranged; and then Emilia sat down by the bedside to watch.

In vain good Mrs. Simpson tried to prevail upon her to lie down and take some rest.

That she felt to be utterly impossible.

She dreaded to be alone; she dreaded to close her eyes. The frightful picture of her mother, with her ghastly face, her flashing eyes, and her unearthly and passionate voice, was ever before her.

To *pray* and *weep* beside the silent clay, now lying insensible in all the more than marble coldness and immovable stillness of death before her, was all that she could do.

The face had now lost its anguished expression, and had resumed that sweet and heavenly composure that attends the first hours after departure.

“Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.”

It was to Emilia an inexpressible comfort to gaze upon it thus. Something of the awful composure seemed to steal over her own senses; the dreadful scene of the dining-room faded into indistinctness before the awful infinite of the contemplation. Gradually her spirits composed themselves to serious and earnest prayer. The tumult of her wild adjurations subsided into a deep, fervent, and most real supplication to the Father of all spirits, for strength and patience to bear the burden in His providence laid upon her. Long was this prayer; she seemed never weary of calling for support from that living fountain, whence she felt alone such help could flow. And she found that help, which is *never* so sought in vain.

She rose from her knees comforted and composed.

The cold morning was now beginning to dawn, and to bring with it another cheerless day.

How cheerless now! The friend, the mother, there lay silent and still; and the unutterable feeling of solitude and desolation with which she met the rays of the rising sun is not to be described. It seemed as if the light of the day was intolerable, and she hastily drew down the blinds, and shut out that external world, to her now so strange and dreary.

Her father had slept during the night, but was going to breakfast in his own room that morning. He had not asked to see her, and she was glad of it. She dreaded the first meeting.

She desired Simpson to bring her the Bible, and to go and take some rest, promising herself to do the same on her return. She opened the Book of Psalms, and sat by her mother's bed, reading by herself what has assisted and strengthened so many a solitary and silent sufferer.

And thus passed the first hours of her loneliness.

Emilia was disturbed about eleven o'clock by a knock at the door. She rose to open it, and encountered the housemaid.

"Mrs. Simpson is in bed, Miss Emilia; and so I thought I might take the liberty to come to you—Mr. Biggs says master seems very ill."

"I will come to him directly," cried Emilia, much alarmed; "take my place, Mary, and wait here till I return."

She hastened to her father's room.

The apartment was darkened, the curtains drawn round the bed; her father's heavy breathing was to be heard as soon as she opened the door. She went up to the bedside, but he was not asleep.

His face was flushed, his eyes not quite closed, and he was breathing in a hard and difficult manner, with a noise most unnatural and distressing.

Mr. Biggs was standing, looking very much terrified and perplexed, by the side of his master's bed.

"How is this? what is the matter, Biggs?" she cried, dreadfully alarmed.

"Why, Miss Emily, that's what I don't know; but this is not a natural sleep, for certain. I have been at master's door several times this morning, for my heart misgave me that all was not right when he ordered me to leave him last night. As all seemed quiet, I hoped he was asleep; but just now, as I listened, I heard this hard breathing, and made bold to open the door; and I think this is not at all like a natural sleep.

"Send Tom for Mr. Finch on the fastest horse in the stable. Oh, my dear father! Do you not know me?"

And the eyes opened with a sort of vacant stare, and then closed again.

She sat down by his side to await the arrival of the apothecary, who was not long in making his appearance.

Mr. Finch looked very much alarmed when he saw his patient,

and pronounced it a seizure upon the brain, brought on, he had no doubt, through the shock occasioned by the sudden death of Mrs. Wyndham.

He bled his patient, applied all the remedies usual in such cases, but freely confessed to the anxious and terrified Emilia, that he thought the case a very bad one; that what turn the disorder would take it was impossible to prognosticate; that the patient must be kept perfectly quiet; and recommended that a physician should immediately be called in.

The remedies he had applied had, however, for the present removed the most alarming symptoms.

Mr. Wyndham opened his eyes; but his daughter, to her inexpressible terror, perceived that his mind was at present so weak and unsettled, that not the slightest assistance could be expected from him in the strange, perilous situation in which she stood.

She looked round her with dismay.

The scene of last night—the expression her father had used, “an execution in the house”—the embarrassment of his affairs—her total ignorance of all his concerns, even, I believe, to the very name of his banker—the absolute necessity of immediately finding money, both to pay the physician and to provide for her mother’s funeral, when she did not even know where to procure thirty pounds—filled her with terror.

She had no friend to whom she could apply but her uncle, Sir Herbert Montague, and he lived in a distant part of the kingdom. She felt, for a short time, absolutely stunned and dizzy with the weight of responsibility thus suddenly imposed upon her, and stood like one almost as much bereft of the power of thought and action as the unfortunate being who lay incapable of either before her.

But her good spirit did not long forsake her. She consigned her father to the care of his faithful old servant, Biggs, and retiring to her own room, sat down to recover breath and reflection.

The inestimable benefits of that wise and sound education which her mother had so sedulously bestowed upon her were now first fully shown. Emilia had been accustomed from her earliest infancy to struggle for the mastery over herself. The exquisite sensibility, the ardent imagination with which she had been endowed by nature, had never been suffered to be pleaded as an excuse for the want of presence of mind, composure, and self-government, on every occasion which might occur. She had been taught to be ashamed of hysterics and tears, as of the most selfish weakness; and to despise the sensibility which fled from the aspect of pain, rather than endure everything for the chance of relieving it. Above all, she had been taught to hold the soundest views of religion; to honour the wisest, and justest, and most benevolent of Beings, by confidence in His wisdom, mercy, and justice; to seek His favour by *doing* all that she could; to rely upon his goodness in

every circumstance; and as a first step in this direction, to use the powers entrusted by Him to her that she might help herself.

These views had aided her naturally hopeful temper, and had formed one of the most cheerful characters in the world. In every circumstance that befel, after the first natural anguish was a little over, Emilia seemed to feel a faith and reliance within, that threw a light upon the darkest hours.

Even now, her good spirit did not forsake her. She never thought of bewailing herself or her destiny; weak lamentations over the inevitable she had been taught to consider as a most vain and culpable indulgence. She had long been preparing herself by prayer and reflection, to meet with fortitude the dreaded event of her mother's death; she indeed felt that every task must be light after that.

She sat down in her own small dressing-room to compose, as I said, her spirits, and to consider what she had to do. She opened the window and looked out upon that terrace and those shrubberies, where she and her mother had sat and wandered together. A few natural tears fell as she gazed upon them. The storm of the night had passed away, and a still autumn morning had succeeded; the yellow and scarlet leaves yet hung upon the trees, and the sky, calm, yet melancholy, was in sympathy with her feelings.

She indulged for a short time in the kind of tender reverie which the scene and the aspect of nature excited; and then, turning from and closing the window, she set herself to consider what she had to do.

Money!

The absolute necessity for money was the first thing that pressed upon her.

Mr. Finch had promised to write and send express for the physician; he would have to come twenty miles, and his fee would be twenty guineas. This she knew; for he had, upon two occasions, been called in to her mother.

She went to her *secrétaire*, to examine her own little store. There never was much money beforehand at Mr. Wyndham's; and the allowance to his daughter was what would have been thought very slender by you young ladies of the present day; but a long war, heavy taxes, and the high price of every necessary of life, carried away so much money in those days, that I assure you, men with handsome fortunes found very little to allow their daughters for vanities. I have known young ladies with six pounds for their allowance; twenty-five guineas, which was Emilia's portion, was reckoned very liberal.

She happened just to have received her quarter, and had five guineas in her drawer.

During her mother's illness, she had been her treasurer. The allowance for clothes and pocket-money to the mistress of the family was sixty guineas; of this, fifteen guineas she knew were in hand. There was enough for the physician.

The wants of to-day were provided for.

She must, if her father's illness continued, visit his money-drawer, and see what could there be found; and then the question recurred, should she apply to her uncle, Sir Herbert? She knew well that he and her father were on indifferent terms, and that to meet him always irritated and tormented Mr. Wyndham to the last degree; for Sir Herbert was an obstinate, dogmatical, and haughty man, who always was accustomed to give the law wherever he happened to be; and favoured her father with his advice in a style and manner, which, however much it was required, and however good it might be, would have rendered it insupportable.

Mr. Wyndham both dreaded and hated his brother-in-law. It was, however, necessary to inform him of her mother's death and of her father's illness; and the first thing to be done was to sit down, and, in a simple and touching letter, to relate to him what had happened. She did not, however, think it proper to allude to the state of embarrassment in which she found herself: it was her father's secret, and, as such, sacred from the very last man upon earth to whom, she knew, he would himself have entrusted it.

She had finished and despatched her letter to go by the next post, when again there was a knock at the door, and, without waiting for permission, it opened, and the pale and scared face of good Simpson presented itself.

"Oh, Miss Emilia!" she said, coming in, without being bid, and shutting the door after her, "are you well enough? Can you come down stairs? There is a man on business to master, and he says he must see him, and cannot leave the house till he does. He has another man with him, a very ill-looking fellow, too. The back kitchen door was open, and they walked straight in, and he showed me a piece of paper—but I can't make anything of it. He seemed shocked, when he heard how it was with my poor mistress and master, and he said he was sorry, but he must see him—or, perhaps, you would step down, seeing master is so ill."

"Give me my shawl, Simpson. Yes, show him into my father's study; I will come down and speak to him."

She hastened along the gallery, passed her mother's door, not venturing to give a glance towards it; and, hurrying down the stairs and across the hall, was soon in the little room that was called her father's study.

It was a little dark secluded chamber, quite embowered in the trees of the shrubbery, hung round with some of his favourite pictures, and fitted with his innumerable gun-cases, pistol-cases, and cases for half a hundred costly, cumbersome, and useless things, which had accumulated under him during his childish reign.

But grieved as Emilia had lately learned to be, when any admirable new contrivance for doing some very ordinary thing—any peculiarly excellent fowling-piece, or unrivalled bit of *virtù*, was purchased and displayed, she could not now enter

the room, so full of the effects of all her poor father's tastes and foibles, without a pang and a certain feeling of tenderness—as she gazed around her, and passed on to occupy, for the first time, the chair of business, which stood empty before his desk. The door opened, and Simpson herself ushered in the two men.

The first was a tall, broad-set, very powerful-looking being; his round head covered with thick, curling, jet-black hair; his face ruddy, his eyes dark; his expression firm and daring, yet not either harsh or cruel. Something almost kind might be distinguished in the bearing of the man, who reminded you forcibly of that noble animal whose name has become the patronymic of the race of genuine Englishmen of those days. It is all forgotten now, and the race has become pretty nearly extinct. I do not know whether that which has succeeded it is much of an improvement—but that by-the-bye.

This man was followed by a very low, ill-looking fellow, with a most sinister countenance, and squint in his eye, who entered with him. But the man, evidently the superior of the two, having cast one glance upon Miss Wyndham as she sat in her father's chair, turned to his understrapper, and very unceremoniously bade him keep the other side of the door, and not come in till he was called.

Having performed this operation, and shut to the door, the man turned round, and, holding a paper in his hand, approached Emilia. He looked at her once or twice, did not seem exactly to know how to venture to address her; a change came over his hardy face, and he muttered,—

“The poor young lady!”

“I understand you had business with my poor father,” said Emilia, endeavouring to speak with composure; “he is very ill—too ill, I am sorry to say, to see any one.”

“Why, miss, as for his being ill, you see, gentlemen are very apt to take to their beds at unlucky times—and—and—send young ladies down to speak for 'em, as does not understand business. I should be better pleased to speak to Mr. Wyndham, if you could be pleased to let me see him for five minutes or so.”

“I assure you,” said Emilia, colouring, and the tears coming into her eyes, “my poor father is utterly incapable of seeing any one, or of even understanding one word of business. Have you not been told that he is threatened with a brain fever? that Mr. Finch has been with him, and that Dr. Lestock is sent for? I do not understand business. I hope my father will be better soon; you had much better call again another day.”

“Call again!” said the man, his countenance changing, and assuming a suspicious expression. “Call again!—I dare say.”

“But what can be done?” she expostulated. “It is, I assure you, quite impossible for my father to enter upon the slightest business. His brain is so unsettled, that he is everything but delirious. I am sorry to give you the trouble, but you really must call again.”

"Miss," said the man, "I am not the principal in this business; and, if I were, call again, wouldn't do—it's too late for that."

"What is your business, then? Tell it me—I will do my best to settle it."

"Settle it!" said he; "why, it's a matter of fifteen hundred pounds, thirteen shillings, and sixpence, besides law expenses. Master Wyndham is sadly belied if he can settle that in a jiffy."

Emilia could only look upon him with a stare of terror and amazement.

"Ah, miss!" said the man, eyeing her, and all his suspicions of connivance vanishing before her artless and natural expression of countenance—for he was one used to read countenances, and to detect in them the slightest line which was false—"Ah, miss! if this were all, he would make short work of it. There would be security enough, even in this house. But, if all tales be true, my principal is only the first of a crowd too big to be counted; and so, you see, he must secure his own interest. He has got a bill of sale upon the furniture for the last fifteen hundred pounds he advanced to Mr. Wyndham; and as some ugly reports have reached him—for that Rile is a *thorough* rascal—he thinks it best to put in an execution, and make sure of the property—unless, indeed, you, miss, can pay the money, as it is said you have plenty of your own, if you knew of it."

Emilia continued to fix her eyes upon him, but she did not speak; her heart was beating so fast with distress and terror, that it was with the utmost difficulty she could keep her seat.

She was endeavouring to struggle with herself, to compose her faculties, and to understand what she was to do. The man looked at her again; and again turned away, and gazed through the window, as if to give her time to recollect herself.

At last she said,—

"I do not quite understand who you are, or what you are here to do. If you come on your own part, I think you will not press your business, whatever it may be, upon a poor young creature, situated as I am. If upon the part of another, perhaps you will be so kind as to represent to him the state of things here. I am sure my father's first wish is to act honourably by every one, but it is impossible that he should arrange his affairs now."

The man looked at her again.

"Why, miss," he said, "the thing is—can you pay the money? or will you pay the money?"

"I assure you, upon my honour," said she, "that twenty guineas is all I at present can command in the world, and I reserve it to pay the doctor's fee, who is coming to see my father. Of course, I have not yet ventured to look into my father's drawer; but, if you will wait here, I will fetch the key, and you shall see what he has."

"Nay, miss," said the man, "you are very soft and young; you must not go and pay away your father's money in that way;

you should understand—for I see you are not used to these matters—the nature of the claims, like. It's a very great shame, and a very great pity, that your father put himself into the hands of that Rile; and if you were to send for him, he would only mess matters, and take care to pay himself, let the other creditors get what they might: so that would only bring the whole hornets' nest upon you. Is there no other gentleman who is in the secret of Mr. Wyndham's affairs but Mr. Rile?"

Emilia felt touched by the frank and kind manner of the man. In her utter destitution of all assistance, in this novel and unexpected situation of embarrassment and perplexity, her heart almost warmed to him, as she said,—

"You must easily believe, sir, that all this is very new and perplexing to me, who am in total ignorance of the state of my poor father's affairs, and know nothing, of course, whatever of law proceedings. I am obliged to you for your advice: I will consider of it. Perhaps my father may be so much better in a few hours that I may be able to consult him."

"Why, miss," said the man, "to tell you the truth, I believe there are a great many writs out against your father; but execution has been delayed, I understand, for a short time, on account of the news as has got about of the poor lady there," making a motion with his thumb, as if he pointed up stairs. "But my principal, having this bill of sale, you must understand—though I don't think he is a harder man than the rest of 'em—yet, if you understand, miss, he was afraid to lose the benefit of the deed, if as how others got possession of the goods. Last night, one out of that Rile's office—but I'm not going to tell secrets—gave him a hint how that fellow had been up here getting some security out of yourself. There was no knowing what the rascal might do more; so, miss, my principal wished either to have his money or a security from *you*—such as you have given to Rile last night, or else make sure of his goods. He wouldn't press for a sale just at this time, you know, but he must be put in possession; and, therefore, if you *cannot* be security—"

"I assure you," said Emilia, "that I know nothing of my own affairs—I did not even know that I possessed that thousand pounds which I yesterday signed away. I should be unwilling to pledge myself to anything, because I am quite in ignorance what I could perform. But to save my father in this miserable extremity from distress and dishonour, I am quite ready to do anything—everything that is within my power."

"I verily believe you, miss; for an honest, truer, less shuffling sort of a countenance I never set my eyes upon. But the more I sees into this mess of a business, the worserer and the blackerer it seems to me. And, miss," approaching nearer to her, and laying his large red hand upon the desk, "take my advice—don't move a finger in it without good counsel. Send to that legal gentleman of your acquaintance in whom you have the most confidence, but don't trust that rascally Rile."

"I will think of it," said she as her poor mother's advice came to her recollection; and she thought of Mr. Danby, the only person connected with the profession with whom she had the slightest personal acquaintance; while something within her whispered that he would not be unwilling to serve her.

But first she must visit her father, and endeavour to obtain his consent to such an application.

She was rising to leave the room.

"Stay, stay, miss," said the bailiff; "we have not quite done yet. I must take possession of the goods."

"How? what do you mean?"

"Why, miss, without much explanation, it will be necessary for me and that man there to stay in the house, like, to keep possession for our principal. You'll have no objection to that, miss. He's a rough-looking un, but Tom's no very bad creature; and as for me, I'd not hurt a hair of your pretty head if it was never so! We shall live with your servants. I dare say the tap below is good enough; and all the expense will be so much a-day for our trouble till the execution is discharged. And hark ye, miss," coming up to her and whispering, "we may be of use for keeping of the door locked. There's a *ca. fa.* out, as I hear—ay, may be one or two—and you'd be sorry to see the poor, foolish gentleman there upstairs carried to prison."

"To prison!" cried she, turning paler and paler, as every new horror of her wretched position presented itself. "To prison! my father to prison!"

"You are as innocent as a baby, that I see, miss," said the man, passing the back of his rough hand across his eyes; but you see the sheriff's writ breaks no locks. We must see to your back-door; which, bless you, stood as wide open for us as Temple Bar. They cannot get in and trouble the gentleman, if we look sharp, and that I'll do for you—for a prettier and nicer young lady I never saw; and it was a shame and a sin of Rile to ruin your father, and all of you, in this fashion. And so good day to you, miss, and I and my man will try the good ale of the Oaks—of which I never heard small beer—and see what's in the larder, for I'm somewhat hungry with this most fashioust job that ever I had a hand in."

And so saying he walked out, leaving Emilia perfectly bewildered.

What was to be done?

If she understood the bailiff aright, there remained not one thing in the house which she could properly call her father's, or honestly apply to their most urgent necessities. The little sum in her own purse, even, could that with justice be called her own? Was it not rightfully belonging to others? Where was she to turn for money, even to furnish bread for the family? What was she to do? Was she to incur fresh debts, when she too justly expected that those already incurred could never be discharged?—deliberately take from others, either in the form of

goods or money, that which she knew she never could repay? Could she do that? Impossible!

Then the pale corpse of her mother, lying stretched in that chamber, rose before her. She had not the means of even affording it a coffin. Her uncle!—certainly, her uncle, would he but come, could of course rescue her from this most urgent of her distresses; but, in the sort of nervous, unintelligible terror that now took possession of her, she dreaded to act under that impression. A horror of incurring fresh debt seemed to possess her almost to frenzy.

She sat down, and wrote a very different letter to her uncle from that which she had last dispatched.

"For the love of Heaven, dear sir, come to me immediately—that is, if you possibly can. My poor father is so ill that he can give directions about nothing. I am in a state of the most unparalleled perplexity and distress. It is impossible for you to conceive the state in which things are here. Come to me, I beg of you, dear sir, as soon as you receive this—that is, if you possibly can.

"EMILIA WYNDHAM."

This letter being dispatched, she felt that help was near, though her note could not possibly reach her uncle for two days; and it would take two more, travelling day and night—which it was not likely he would choose to do—before he could join her.

Her spirits were, however, in some degree tranquillised after having taken the decisive step of applying to him; and she felt more able to look her situation in the face. The certainty that her uncle would soon join her, and that, however severely he might be inclined to look upon Mr. Wyndham's conduct, he would not hesitate to repay any debt she might have found it absolutely necessary to incur for herself and her mother, enabled her to overcome the sort of wild dream of terror which had first seized upon her, and to think upon what was necessary.

For her mother's funeral she determined to give no orders, except such as might be absolutely required, till Sir Herbert's arrival. He was a man so difficult, nay, impossible to please, that she could not guess whether he would choose it to be executed according to the late or present circumstances of the family. If she gave orders with all the plainness and modesty which her heart told her was the best honour, she knew she might be reproached for insensibility and impiety, under the circumstances of the time, to her poor mother's memory: if, on the contrary, she ventured to arrange things in a way suited to her uncle's present and her mother's former station, she would probably be accused of a pride and wilful extravagance utterly unpardonable in her present situation.

She resolved to wait.

That a physician had been sent for at such a great expense to attend upon her father, she knew would be resented by Sir Herbert as a most culpable piece of extravagance. She rejoiced, however, that it was done: the blame of such an action she could cheerfully bear.

She thought now it would be better to await her uncle's arrival before applying to Mr. Danby. It was an infinite source of relief to her mind to cast the responsibility of her future proceedings upon another.

She had dispatched her letter, and was crossing the hall to go up stairs and inquire for her father, when the footman met her with the letter-bag in his hand.

She took it from him, intending to get the key, which she supposed to be lying in her father's bedroom. She listened at the door some little time, in the hope that he might be asleep; but, hearing voices, she opened it.

Her father was talking to himself in a manner the most incoherent, while Biggs was vainly endeavouring to argue with and pacify him. He was insisting upon being dressed, and going immediately to his wife's funeral, saying he heard the carriage in the yard, and that he should be too late; and abusing Biggs for his insensibility and inattention, who, poor man, was vainly endeavouring to quiet, by talking reason, one whose reason, alas! had fled.

"Come here, child!" said Mr. Wyndham, as soon as Emilia appeared. "Are you not ashamed to wear that pink muslin on the day of your mother's funeral? And why do you keep me prisoner in this manner? I say, Emilia, I insist upon getting up. I *am* a very wretched, foolish old man, I know that, but not so old as to be treated in this manner like a child. *She* wouldn't have allowed it. *She* always treated me with respect—that she did; and I'm not used to it—and I *will*—"

"Alas, my dear father! be still—your face is all crimsoned with fever. It is a mistake, indeed it is—my poor mother's funeral is not to be yet. You must get well, sir—you must lie still, and get well, or you will not be able to follow her to the grave. You *would* follow her to the grave, dear papa—would you not? Be still then!"

And thus she attempted to soothe and pacify him; sometimes not altogether without effect, most often quite in vain. His delirium was such, that it was plain all real communication between his mind and that of any other person was at an end. It was impossible to consult him upon *any* matter; all that could be done was to tranquillise him as much as possible.

It was a dreadful spectacle. Sometimes he would forget his wife, and then the subjects of his debts and embarrassments would seem to take entire possession of his mind—he was suffering under all the horrors of arrest and imprisonment. Sometimes he was bolting the door against the bailiffs, and crying to his servants, in an agony of terror, to make fast the windows, at which he saw their terrible eyes glaring. Then he was immured in a prison, in which he fancied himself chained to the ground, crying out and bewailing his folly and his sins, and suffering, in an imagination but too faithful to the truth of his situation, all the agonies of remorse, regret, and despair.

It was in vain to conceal the truth from the faithful old

servant, who, the tears running over his cheeks, would persist in endeavouring to do away with his poor master's delusions, by assuring him that he was in his bed, quite safe; that no cursed bailiffs should ever get at him; that his house was his castle, and every servant would die in his defence.

All this time the heart of his poor daughter was dying within her at the reflection that the dreaded evil was already consummated, and his house no longer his own.

The letter-bag, unopened, was still in her hand; but when her father, exhausted by his raving, sank into a sort of restless slumber, seeing the key upon the chimney-piece she opened it.

It was quite full of letters—each, as she took them out one after another, directed to her father. In the present state of affairs she ventured to open them. They were, one and all, upon the same subject—long bills for articles of all descriptions; petitions for payment in some; threats and insolent expressions of contempt for promises broken in others; heart-rending entreaties for a *small* part of the account from others; others were lawyers' letters, filled with terms she could not understand, and only, therefore, the more alarming. The last letter she drew out of the bag was in her uncle's hand, and addressed to her mother. It had slipped into the letter-book, and it was not till she was about to close the bag that she perceived it. It was short, and as follows:—

"DEAR SISTER,—As Emmy's account of you is pretty comfortable this morning, I shall not longer delay my projected journey, which Puguin tells me will do me a great deal of good. Indeed, I feel I want a change. I shall start to-morrow for the Highlands, and, perhaps, get as far as the Shetlands; it may be, cross to the Giant's Causeway. I do not know where I shall go, or where I shall be for the next three weeks, so it is no use to write to me. Tell Emmy to let me find letters from her on my return, about three weeks or a month hence. I take John, and my own horses. I hope this cold weather will do you no harm. An odd time, you will say, for me to start on such an expedition; but I have always wished to see the Highlands in winter—"

She read no more—the letter fell from her hand; and, when she recovered her senses, she found poor Biggs supporting her head, and endeavouring to moisten her lips with a glass of water.

"Miss Emmy! Miss Emmy! look up. What's the matter? Don't take on so," said the good old man.

She opened her eyes, and looked in a wild, distracted manner about the room. It was some time before she could recover speech or recollection; but when she had a little collected her spirits, she saw her course at least plainly before her. There was nothing else to be done—she must write to Mr. Danby.

Her letter was as follows:—

"In the greatest perplexity and distress, I venture to apply to Mr. Danby; perhaps the knowledge he at present possesses of my poor father's affairs may lead him to surmise the nature of the difficulties which surround me, when he hears that my father is delirious in his bed, and that the messengers of the law

are in the house. I am too ignorant to be aware how far I commit an impropriety in applying to one of Mr. Danby's reputation, and begging him to assist me, in this my extremity, with his advice. He best knows whether he can extricate me from the bewilderment in which I find myself. All I can say is, that if he could come down to the Oaks, were it only for a few hours, his presence would be an inexpressible relief to

"EMILIA WYNDHAM.

"My mother died last night at about eight o'clock."

CHAPTER VIII.

*Nova angeletta sovra l'ale accosta
Scese dal cielo in su la trista riva,
Lànd' io passava soll per mio destino.*

MR. DANBY was sitting in a dark back room, whence windows, which seemed not to have been cleaned for centuries, almost excluded the light; his table, covered with black leather, almost completely hidden by pile upon pile of papers; his pale and thin face, still paler and more sallow, if possible, than when we saw him last, resting upon his thin, wiry hand; his hair ruffled and thrown back, as if pushed away in impatient and perplexing thought, and his mind engaged in solving some knotty point of his profession. Amidst a heap of letters, a small one, written upon delicate satin paper, and directed in a beautiful female hand, but which had evidently trembled a good deal in the writing it, was presented to him.

Mr. Danby turned the letter about between his finger and thumb, looking at it with that kind of curiosity with which a naturalist might be supposed to examine some curious and delicate shell, and then, with a sort of peevish expression of contempt, threw it down upon the table, and took up those letters of a more important size and business-like aspect which lay before him.

Still, while he opened the first long folio sheet which presented itself, his eye continued fixed upon the little, delicate, and sweetly-scented missive, and, turning it round to look at it again, he perceived that it had a very small black seal: he held the seal somewhat curiously to his eye, and he then thought that he had seen that beautiful antique seal once before, upon occasion of his taking up a note by mistake, which was lying upon a certain drawing-room table in the country, at a certain gentleman's house. He recollected it directly—but not the sooner did he open the letter.

He laid it carefully on one side, and very conscientiously, or, rather, like the truest epicure, opened and read every one of the numerous missives around him before—I will not say before he touched it again—for he could not forbear taking it up from time to time while thus employed, and looking at it.

At last he laid it down upon a small folded sheet of writing-paper, which by this time was anything but white (the flowers

she had given him were in it), and continued to attend to what he was about.

At length all the letters were read, properly arranged, and laid one upon the other methodically, and then—he took up the little letter for the last time.

The sudden start that he made as he read it—the colour that flushed up into his pale cheek—the flashing of his eye—the smile of sweetness that came over that thin, sardonic mouth!—you should have beheld.

It was really touching to see the emotion that shook every nerve in this dry, insensible man.

He laid the letter upon the table—bent down—read it again—and then—oh, smile not, youth or beauty, in contempt!—this grave, aged, business-like, withered man, raised the morsel of insensible paper, and pressed it to his lips with rapture. I am almost ashamed to betray him—I feel that there is something sacred in such a love, in such a breast!—something pathetic in this sweet spring of tenderness welling up in a desert such as this!—something most piteous in feelings excited so sadly too late!—something lamentable in such a passion, that can never, never meet return.

But he did not think of any return. His ecstasy at receiving such a summons from the being whom he had never for one moment forgotten was something too supreme for expression. Words it, of course, would never find with him. He shuffled away his papers—rose from his chair—hurried out of his room—locked his door—called his clerk, who officiated as manservant, told him to order a chaise and four horses for Hounslow immediately, and then shuffled hastily into his own room, and began to pack his portmanteau, much in the fashion of the man who emptied his drawers into a sheet, and pushed it into his portmanteau.

He would not wait even to tell his mother where he was going; but, sending her a hasty line to inform her that he should be out of town for about twenty-four hours, told his clerk to say to all comers that he had been summoned upon indispensable business into the country, tumbled into the post-chaise, and, as fast as four post-horses, such as they were in those days, could carry him, was whirled over the stones on the way to Hounslow; in such a confusion of thought, in such a tempest of happiness, that his brain and his heart, little accustomed to these excitements of delight, were almost in a state of delirium!

It was about eight o'clock on the following morning that Mr. Danby found himself driving up through the avenue of ancient oaks which led and gave its name to the mansion of Mr. Wyndham.

As he approached it, even he, unobservant as he usually was of mere external things, could not help being struck with the silent melancholy that pervaded it, and contrasted so forcibly with the impression of gaiety, brightness, and cheerfulness, which has been left upon his imagination. When last he had

left it, bright lights illuminated the front of the mansion—the sound of cheerful conversation resounded through the open windows—the crowding servants were filling the hall, or hanging about the steps of the vestibule—horses, carriages, grooms, and coachmen, were heard from the not very distant stable-yard.

Now a silence as of death pervaded all things. The blinds were let down in the front of the house; not a creature, not even a dog, was to be seen about; not a sound issued from the stable-yard or offices. It seemed like a mansion of the dead.

It was a dull November morning; heavy clouds covered the sky, and the winds swept moaning through the swaying trees. The carriage, however, drove briskly up to the door, and one of the postilions was dismounting to ring the bell, when Mr. Danby, struck by the air of desolation which pervaded the front of the house, desired him to drive round to the offices.

Emilia had passed a sorrowful night, divided between attending to her father and the attempt to take that rest which she felt to be absolutely necessary, in order to enable her to go through the task imposed upon her.

The physician had visited her the day before, and the opinion he had given upon the case had only served still more to increase her alarm. The delirium had considerably increased; it was a delirium of that worst and most alarming kind, which too often, if it do not issue in death, leaves the brain so much disordered and weakened as to impair its functions for the rest of life. The most undivided attention was required, both to keep the patient quiet and to apply the necessary remedies for cooling and tranquillising the brain.

In this, with the assistance of her two faithful servants, she had been unremittingly employed, till her own brain began to reel and turn dizzy with excitement and fatigue, and she felt the absolute necessity of endeavouring to take a little repose.

But repose seemed impossible.

No sooner did she lay her aching head upon her pillow than all her sorrows and all her anxieties appeared to present themselves in a darker and more terrible array. What was to be done?

The physician—of course not in the slightest degree aware of the circumstances of the family—had accepted his fee of twenty guineas, and finally drained her little purse; and her horror of touching any of her father's money, under the uncertainty in which she stood, began to amount almost to a morbid feeling.

She could not rest—dark, threatening phantoms of undefined ill pursued her; and she found the melancholy of her waking thoughts, and the view of her actual position, far less intolerable than these gloomy, indistinct shadows.

She had risen, and gone into her mother's room to watch and pray by her side.

The prospect of death—the calm and deep tranquillity—the indescribable solemnity which the presence of the dead impresses

on the human soul—tranquillised hers. The storm was over—the strong battle of life had ceased—the anxious energy, the strife with evil, were at an end—sunk into that marble stillness, that dread quiet, which, ponder on it as we may, we never, never can comprehend.

Where was she gone? In what region was that spirit now?—that burning intelligence, that high intellect, that deep, hidden sensibility, that stern resistance against wrong, that mother's passion to defend her child? A cold, marble portraiture of what it once had been was all that remained.

They were not tears that the unhappy daughter shed. Her eyes seemed now too dry for tears; it was a deep, earnest, awe-struck contemplation, which, however, seemed to strengthen her heart and to tranquillise her spirits.

How small appear the keenest interests of life before such a spectacle! How brief the space of hurried being ere we must be as they are, and the most strenuous circumstances become less than the memory of a dream! Soon it would all be over, and the terrible ruins which now surrounded her sink into the night of the past; and, as with so many vaster ruins, the plough of time pass over them, and every trace of what had been be forgotten.

It had been to pray that she came there—but prayer was mute. When we soften and melt, then we pray—then we lift up the eye of faith and hope, and the gushing, living waters refresh the thirsting soul. When we are wound up to a pitch like this, the pulse of life stands still. We are silent, awe-struck, and, for the moment, even without ideas; we neither look above nor around—we only look *there*.

She was in a mood like this when she was summoned to meet one, his soul just awakened from the deepest night of all—from the absolute death of sensibility—to the wildest and strongest passion of the heart.

Mr. Danby had been ushered into the small breakfast-parlour, where a fire was kindled, and the table already set for breakfast for *one*.

The fire blazed cheerily, and glittered upon the table equipage and the frames of the many pictures which adorned the little apartment; so that, though the blinds were down, it looked light and cheerful, and contrasted with the invariable cloud of gloom that pervaded the rest of the house.

He did not sit down, though the servant had rolled Mr. Wyndham's comfortable arm-chair to the fire for him; he stood leaning with his arm upon the mantel-piece, lost in sweet thoughts, and contemplating, with a pleasure quite new, the scene before him;—the elegant little apartment, fitted up with all that could render life agreeable to a mind such as his;—no show, which he would have despised; no apparent extravagance, which he would have hated; no exaggeration of luxury, which he would

have condemned; but all so fresh, so light, so delicate, so pleasant! The few tables with their books—the pictures—the elegant furniture—a few flowers from the greenhouse—the beautiful silken work-baskets of the ladies—the blazing fire—the choice ornaments on the mantel-piece! What a contrast to his chambers—his foul, dusty chambers, littered with musty papers and dingy parchments, with their dirty windows, their dark, creaking staircase, their worm-eaten and discoloured furniture! So he had lived—or rather existed—buried, as it were, alive, for nearly thirty years—ignorant, as it would have seemed, that any better existence was to be found: like the shell-fish, fastened to its native rock in some gloomy, sea-girt cave, that knows not of the bright myriads that cleave with finny, rapid wing, and sport in, the crystal element above.

His mother's close and gloomy house in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, was little better than his own chambers; there was scarcely more light or cheerfulness, and only a little less dust and dirt.

He took up a small black case that lay upon the mantel-piece, and, in mere absence of mind, opened it. What a picture!

A cherub, with a face of angel serenity, love, and innocence; the locks of golden hair hanging round the face, and showering about the round waxen shoulders—the white frock—the blue sash!

“EMILIA WYNDHAM, AGED SIX YEARS,”

in small seed pearl, surrounding a lock of that golden hair.

He had never, I believe, noticed a child before. He!—he had never, except as *minors* or wards in chancery, contemplated the existence of such things. Of course, he had tumbled against little, dirty, impudent-looking boys and girls in the streets, and had thought just as much of them as of any rough dray or cart, or the like, that might have encumbered the path he was treading.

He started as at a heavenly vision, bent down his eye close to the picture, and was engaged in a sort of reverie, rather than contemplation, over it, when the lock turned, the door opened, and she herself appeared.

She had not yet assumed her mourning, but was in a pale lilac muslin morning-gown, with a good deal of white about it. He did not know what it was, but it looked to him like the colour of the dove's wing. She looked deathly pale—more than pale, sallow. Her beautiful rosy colour, which had seemed to him like the waxen cup of the rose she had given him, all fled; her animated eye was grave and anxious, her bright hair was hanging discoloured round her face.

Such was the change! Such was the beautiful half-cherub, half-angel—goddess—Hebe—Flora—as he might have called her, had his vague imagination taken words—of his dreams. Such was she become.

Was he disappointed?

No.

There is something to the heart of man yet dearer, when the divinity of his imagination, the bright goddess of his thoughts, something too radiant and beautiful for real life, is presented, after all, but as the tearful, suffering daughter of clay. He could have fallen at her feet, and wrapped his arms about her knees in silent adoration! And what did he do? He looked excessively ugly, excessively shy, and excessively awkward—his head more uncouthly carried, his arms more dangling, his knees more in, his gait more shuffling than ever—as he moved forward and met the hand extended to him, while a smile of grateful pleasure, like the gleam of the sun upon a dreary winter day, just lighted for a moment her countenance.

His extreme shyness and awkwardness were a relief to her. She had felt a little afraid when first he was announced, and, had not her feelings already mounted so high, would have come down to the interview with this clever man of business with all the trepidation that girls of her age are accustomed to feel at the idea of meeting those awful personages, middle-aged men—men of high standing in the estimation of other men.

They are almost as much afraid as these personages are of them—not quite so much, I believe, but it will do for a comparison.

But when she saw Mr. Danby look so very awkward and so very much afraid of her, it restored her at once to her self-possession—for she was a coward in grain, like all the rest of her sex, bluster as they will.

"I am deeply, deeply obliged to you, Mr. Danby," she began, in a voice of much feeling, while he held the hand she had given to him; "I cannot express to you how much I feel this act of kindness. I ought to make many, many apologies for presuming so far upon a gentleman on whose consideration I had not the slightest claim; but the excessive distress and perplexity of my present situation, my total ignorance of business, my uncle's most unfortunate absence, and—and—and—"

But here her voice began to falter.

He could have listened to her for ever, as she ran on in this way in a fluttered, hurried voice. He never thought of stopping her by the usual assurances; he kept holding her hand, his eyes bent upon it, for he had not courage to raise them further, drinking in, with a sort of exquisite delight, the tones of her sweet, harmonious voice.

The trembling and faltering, like the breaking of pebbles in a clear flowing stream, awakened him from his ecstatic reverie; he lifted up his head, and said, abruptly and somewhat roughly—

"Yes, yes; I know—"

He only thought of preventing her from entering upon a painful subject; but the tone startled and checked her.

She withdrew her hand and was silent.

"I mean," he said, stammering and confused, "I mean that I am truly sorry for you, and I wish—I mean I hope—I haven't

offended you," he added, going close up to her, and in a most beseeching tone of voice.

"Oh no, far from that," she replied, recovering herself. "Will you not be seated, Mr. Danby, and take some breakfast?" she then asked, with her hand upon the bell. "Excuse me; I believe I am very nervous to-day."

"You look very ill, indeed," said he; "I never saw any one so much changed in my life. I am afraid you have suffered greatly, you look so very, very ill."

"Do I, indeed?" said she, and she could scarcely suppress a smile at his simplicity; but even that little smile did her good. "I have, indeed, had cause—"

The servant just then entered, and she ordered breakfast immediately, and, sitting down at the head of the table, prepared herself to make it for him.

He took a chair and sat down by her.

It is astonishing how much good this simple arrangement seemed to do her. There is a tendency to monomania in grief and anxiety, for which such trifling, little, vulgar occupations and distractions afford the best and most wholesome relief. It is by the small but necessary occupations of the day that we are carried living, and with minds undistracted, through such hours of darkness. The very opening of the tea-chest, the preparing the cups, the ordering fresh sugar—these miserable little employments were of service. They are, after all, among the best antidotes against melancholy—these occupations, common as daily bread. His presence, too, had lifted an insupportable load from her heart. Her dreadful perplexity was at an end. She had the most perfect faith in Mr. Danby's ability, and the most perfect confidence in his kindness—*why*, she could hardly have told herself; but so it was. And, perhaps, we could have told her why.

She is sitting there making his tea, and, for the first moment since her mother's death, swallowing hers with a feeling of refreshment; she cannot yet eat, but the tea is doing her infinite good.

He is drinking the tea she pours out for him, and it is as the nectar of the gods; but, to win heaven, neither could he, at that moment, have eaten a morsel.

"I am afraid there is nothing that you like, sir," she said, politely and anxiously; "is there anything you are in the habit of taking that we can get for you?"

"No, thank you, ma'am; pray don't—don't speak of it. One other cup of tea, and then, you will excuse me, but" (the sound man of business was now beginning at last to make his voice heard, and to silence that of the man of passion) "the sooner you put me into possession of the matters on which, if I understand, you desire my advice, the better. If I comprehend the purport of the letter with which you were pleased to honour me, there is an execution out against your father, and the bailiffs are in the house. They cannot have taken him into custody?"

She shrank a little at the word, and the somewhat harsh tone of voice in which this last was delivered. Mr. Danby, once engaged in business, was himself again: his countenance as hard, his tone as dry, his eye as cold and piercing.

"No," she said, shuddering; "but, if I understood the man rightly who came first, he would have been—would be—if he were not at this moment so frightfully ill; and oh! sir," and she began to feel very much afraid again of this cold, penetrating face of business, "his affairs—"

"Are in the worst of all possible messes," said he. "I anticipated this, Miss Wyndham; and, when I was last here, pointed out to your father what I thought the only course that could possibly save him from utter destruction. My advice was not received in the spirit in which it was given, or rather, there are some characters so hopelessly weak and so recklessly self-indulgent, that there is no stopping them while a penny is to be obtained by fair means or foul. I wish the means adopted by that vile, shuffling rascal, Rile, for supplying Mr. Wyndham with money, may not have been as dishonest and dangerous as the purposes on which it was squandered were childish and ridiculous."

She was almost petrified at this sudden and rude attack; but the manner in which he spoke of her father before her face roused her indignation, and she could not help saying—

"My father may have deserved censure—I cannot be a judge; but before his daughter, at least, I might have hoped he would have been spared."

"Spared!" said he; "from what I saw of his proceedings while I was here, I think his conduct to *you*, and to your mother, the most infamous part of these shameful proceedings. To think of his robbing you both in this inexcusable manner!"

She was at a loss for words to reply.

His eyes had been bent upon the carpet while he was speaking; engrossed with his own thoughts, and, according to his usual habit, soon entirely lost to the world about him, he had not the slightest perception of what she was feeling—of the pain, distress, and terror now visible in her countenance. The idea of exposing her father's affairs to so rude and terrible a judge began to be insupportable.

At last he looked up, but even then was far from perceiving how hurried she was.

He said,—

"We had better not lose any time,"—and he looked at his watch. "Let me see Mr. Wyndham's papers, and form some estimate of the position of things. I dare say the whole are in the most unpardonable confusion, but some ideas may be gathered from them."

"I do not know," she began, hesitating, colouring, and the tears beginning to cloud into her eyes—"I begin to think, perhaps, that I have no right—I don't know whether I ought—to unlock my father's private drawers, display his papers, his affairs to a—a stranger."

"Why did you send for me, then?" said he, rudely, for he felt offended.

"I mean, I don't know"—all her confidence in him was now lost—"I don't know what I ought to do. My perplexities, my difficulties, only increase!" And the tears stood in her eyes, but they did not fall.

He looked at her, and was again charmed and softened, though not in the slightest degree aware of the cause of this sudden change in her resolution. He attributed it to a very prudential and proper repugnance to giving up such important things as papers without a proper authority; to such a rational difficulty and view of things he was quite sensible; so, laying his hand upon the table, he said, in a calm and steady voice,—

"Your dislike to surrender your father's papers to the inspection of a stranger, without his authority, is perfectly just and reasonable—and, under any circumstances, as a *stranger* I could not so receive them; but, if I understood the purport of your letter, you summoned me here as a *friend*—as a *friend* I came—as a *friend* I am ready to offer any advice and assistance in my power. Surely, Miss Wyndham," and a faint colour suffused even his pale cheek, "Miss Wyndham cannot believe that I would make any unworthy, any dishonourable use of her confidence?"

She saw at once how far he was from comprehending her feelings, and at the same instant blamed her own susceptibility. She hastened to assure him that her repugnance arose only from the natural hesitation of a person acting under circumstances so new and unexpected, and only begged him to assure her she was acting right in what she was about to do—to unlock her father's most private repositories.

"It all depended upon the urgency of the case," he said.

She proceeded to relate in detail all that had passed; she did not omit, exquisitely painful as the relation was to her, the narration of what had taken place on the fatal evening of her mother's death.

He listened in profound silence, not interrupting her relation by the slightest gesture, or even change of countenance. There was something quite terrible to her in his grave, serious, impassible manner. Nothing is so alarming to a young girl of feeling as this impassibility, which seems to refuse all sympathy with weakness or with error.

She ended, and there was a silence of considerable length.

At last he lifted up his eyes, which had been bent upon the floor in serious rumination, and said,—

"After the dislike and hesitation you have very properly expressed to put me in possession, unauthorised, of your father's secrets and papers, it is extremely disagreeable to me to say—and it is the first time in my life—and I vow to — shall be the last that ever I will do such a thing—it is necessary, if I am to be of any use in this, as far as I can judge, most disgraceful business, that I should be immediately put in possession of the

facts, so far as they can be learned from papers probably in excessive confusion. But, once more, do you thoroughly understand? This surrender of the papers is your act and deed—done upon your own responsibility, and at no desire of mine; surrendered to me as *amicus familiars*—friend of the family—in order to tell you what you must do till your uncle and better advisers get about you.”

“I understand,” said she, rising to lead the way to the study, “that if I do wrong, the whole responsibility is to rest upon me. I am prepared for it; for, indeed, what other course can I take?”

He made no reply, but followed her to the little, secluded, and darksome apartment.

She opened the drawer, and put him in possession of the papers.

He sat down, and began inventorising, examining, and noting, and was soon lost in business; this habit, which had become a second nature, of giving his whole attention to what he was about, rendering him soon insensible to the presence of any one else in the room.

He had sat in this way for a considerable time, she standing by the fire playing with a stick of sealing-wax, and impatiently waiting for a sentence of intelligence or for one of dismissal; but he never lifted up his head or took the slightest notice of her. At last she became quite anxious to go to her father's room, and she ventured to step to his side, and to say—

“Can I be of any service?”

He started at the voice, and looked suddenly up. It was like an apparition; in the midst of his preoccupation, her image, at any time suddenly presented, would have sent the blood to his heart. The impression wore off, as you have seen, when they had been long together; but its effect, as I have said, suddenly presented, was irresistible.

A strange, unwonted expression was in his eye.

“I haven't been keeping you standing here, I hope—have I?” he asked, looking rather hurried and confused. “No, I shall not want you at present; I have not done examining the papers; I will send you word when I have done.”

“I am wanted in my father's room; if you will please to ring the bell, and summon me, I shall be at your service, sir, at any moment.”

“Very well.”

And, letting her open the door for herself, he resumed his examination, while she went up to her father.

With what different feelings did Emilia leave Mr. Danby from those with which she had seated herself by him at the breakfast-table! Then, her heart was overflowing with gratitude and warm with confidence; now, *froissée* by his roughness,

wounded by his rudeness, and offended by the way in which, in her very presence, he had spoken of her father, she was upon the point of bitterly regretting that she had ever applied to him.

She felt almost angry—certainly dissatisfied with herself—that she had been led to lay open to so severe and unpitying a judge his foibles and his faults. All his little ill-temperers, all his many errors, were forgotten by the tender and pious child; she thought of him only as stretched helpless upon the bed of sickness—as reduced to the extreme of poverty, and all his misconduct exposed to the cruel eye of one who seemed to possess neither indulgence nor pity.

She remembered the harshness of the sentiments which he had expressed when he visited them before, and wondered how she had found courage to apply to him.

She entered her father's room.

He was very low—in one of the low fits of his delirium. As soon as he saw her, for he knew her perfectly well in spite of his wandering fancies, he began talking to her in the tenderest and most affectionate, though in somewhat a childish manner; bewailing his faults, and the evils he was bringing upon her and her saint-like mother, whom it was evident, now the disguises of temper and jealousy were taken away, he worshipped to the bottom of his heart, and of whose death he did not seem to be in the least aware.

It was sweet to her to be thus addressed, and to fondle and soothe him like a child; and then she thought of the pitiless, unrelenting eye that was employed in scanning the record of his weaknesses and follies.

And, much as she was indebted to him, she almost hated Mr. Danby.

CHAPTER IX.

Defect of manners, want of government,
 Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain
 Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
 Beguiling them of commendation.—KING HENRY IV.

IN about two hours she heard the study-bell ring. There was a knock at the door, and the voice of Biggs.

"Please, Miss Wyndham, will you please to step down into master's study?"

She came down, and opened the door.

He came forward to meet her with more assurance and politeness than she had ever observed in him before. This, you will observe, was a meeting upon business, and he was at home there; and he handed her to a chair, and seated himself opposite to her.

He looked exceedingly grave, but there was much more feel-

ing and softness than usual in his voice, as, after fixing his eyes upon her in silence for a few moments, he began—

“I am very sorry to have to tell you, from what I can gather from your father’s papers, that his affairs are in a more desperate condition than even *I* had anticipated.”

She could scarcely turn paler than she was before; she did not, however, shrink, or even move; she sat fixed in mute attention.

Her steadiness increased, if possible, the admiration he felt for her; he began to respect her—a very new feeling with him.

“You have a great deal of fortitude and courage, Miss Wyndham, and they are very rare and noble qualities.”

This was, perhaps, the first sentence approaching to a sentiment that had dropped from his lips for years.

“Shall I with frankness lay before you the state of the case, —so far at least, as you can be capable of comprehending it?”

She did not speak, but signified her acquiescence by a gesture.

“Your father is involved beyond all hope of extrication. So far from possessing a penny in the world, I doubt whether his whole fortune could discharge his obligations, were it twice told.”

There was a faint, smothered cry. He looked up, and, little as he was accustomed to be moved, there was something in the expression of her face that touched him deeply. He rose from his chair, went up to her, and making a gesture as if he would support her with his arm, for she had fallen back in her chair, said, in a kind tone,—

“I have been too abrupt, I am afraid. This is too much for you; let me—” and he made a movement as if he would raise her head—“let me, dear Miss Wyndham—”

But she shook him off with a sort of hidden shudder. Unjust as it is, we do not love the messenger of evil; and her dislike to him was increasing in spite of herself: the “dear Miss Wyndham” gave a little tremble of repugnance.

“Thank you, sir,” said she, recovering herself, and sitting upright in her chair, while he, in some trepidation, resumed his; “I am better. I was a good deal prepared for this; but I did not think things had been so very—very—”

“Can’t be worse—the infatuated fool!” he exclaimed, for the moment roused to indignation by the distress he witnessed, and again forgetting all delicacies and proprieties in the bitterness and exasperation of his feelings.

“My poor father!” was all she answered, humbly.

“Father!” he said, with increasing bitterness—“a pretty father to ruin such a child!” he muttered.

She said no more—she could not bear it; and yet she felt, at the same time, that her irritation against one so invincibly blind to the nature of her feelings was childish and useless. She tried, too, to remember how very kind it was of him thus to interest

himself in her father's affairs, and that, if he was rude in his mode of telling unpalatable truths, he must be excused for it.

So she sat in her usual method, quite still and silent, for a few minutes, to recover her spirits.

And then she said,—

“What would you advise to be done?”

“The worst feature in the case,” he replied, “is, that your father has put himself so entirely into the power of that low scoundrel attorney, Rile.”

And then, while she listened with deep attention, he very patiently endeavoured to explain to her all the intricate involvements of securities, under-securities, cross-bills, mortgages, bonds, notes of hand, &c. &c. with which I will not trouble you, and which, indeed, I am not lawyer sufficient clearly to understand myself, unless I had a Mr. Danby by my side to hold the clue to the inextricable labyrinth.

Enough to say, that it was as he asserted: twice Mr. Wyndham's fortune would have been insufficient to discharge his obligations.

Returning to whence he had begun,—

“The first thing, Miss Wyndham,” he said, “is to get you out of the gripe of that execrable Rile, whose purposes I see; but,” he added, seeing her turn very pale again, and looking at her with a genuine expression of kindness, which she neither perceived nor could understand, “leave all that to me. Trust to me; I possess the means, and they shall be used in your behalf, to liberate you—and, for your sake, your father—from *his* clutches. You shall have time—and he shall have time—to pause, and look about him. He shall not be hurried to a jail, whether he deserve it or not; he shall be rescued from *that*, for your sake.”

The peculiar way in which all this was spoken failed to excite her attention; her whole soul was in dismay at the revelation which had just been made to her.

“Thank you, sir—thank you, sir,” was all she could articulate in a hurried manner.

“One thing more,” said he, as he was preparing to close the drawer, after neatly replacing all the papers in their proper situations; “have you any ready money?”

She coloured crimson, but said nothing.

“The drawer is empty,” said he, “that is to say, this drawer,” opening the *secrétoire* again, and displaying a small drawer within; “this, which I conclude was his money-drawer—there are only two guineas and a few half-crowns in it. Do you think he had any more in other parts of the house?”

She shook her head.

“And there is Mrs. Wyndham's funeral,” said he, abruptly.

She felt quite sick, and her knees trembled. This rough way of bringing painful images before the mind was too much for her.

“Suffer me, then, to be your banker. Here is a cheque,”

hastily opening his pocket-book, taking out a banker's cheque, and filling it up, "for one hundred pounds. If that is not sufficient for the moment," he added, hastily signing several blank cheques—"these are what we call *cartes blanches*—you have only to fill them up for what you want; here, mind, you must write the sum in figures, and here in words. Shall I put them into the money-drawer, and give you the key? You must take care of them, if you please, for if they fell into any other person's hands, there might be the d—l and all to pay."

And he was putting them into the drawer before she could recover breath to exclaim,—

"Impossible, Mr. Danby!"

"What do you mean?" said he; "why should it be impossible?"

There was a simplicity in his tone and look, as he lifted up his head and said this, that quite touched her.

No man was more indifferent to the money he had heaped together by his laborious life than Mr. Danby; and though he understood the world wonderfully well, there were some things he never could understand: and why one man should not offer money to another man, if that man chanced to want it—that is, if the other man was willing to let him have it—he never could be brought to comprehend.

"You *must* have some money immediately, my dear Miss Wyndham; it may be three weeks, at least, before you can communicate with your uncle; and to try to get things upon credit just now, believe me, might expose you to very disagreeable consequences."

Still she said nothing. Not in the least understanding the expression of distress in her countenance, he went on:—

"Never mind the money, it is nothing to me. Take just what you want. Nay," he added, seeing her increasing agitation, and some slight idea of its cause at last penetrating into his mind, "Sir Herbert will repay me when he comes, if you will not allow me the pleasure of assisting you; so pray have no scruples. Indeed, what can you do?"

What could she do, indeed!

She stammered—she hesitated—she turned red—she turned pale—she was sick—she was irritated. To accept money from *him*!—from one with so little gentleness, so little delicacy, so rudely careless of wounding her feelings, even when he was doing his best to assist her!

Emilia's was no character of sickly refinement, yet there is something in money obligations so revolting to a generous mind, except under the most peculiar relations! There might have been those to whom she would have been proud to be indebted for anything; but she felt—in this, however, she was unjust—that a dependence of this sort would give Mr. Danby an additional right to abuse her father, and disregard her feelings as much as he pleased. I do not pledge myself that he would have had sufficient refinement and sense of delicacy to be more

reserved in his contemptuous expressions of disapprobation *after* Mr. Wyndham had made use of his money;—all I maintain is, that the circumstance would not have had the vulgar effect of making him more so.

This Cymon was rather more slow of improvement than the rustic of the fable; and you will think, and you are right, his was a far more hopeless case. The clown could see his slouching gait in his looking-glass, but where was the mirror that should present to this man the thousand wants of his rude, uncultured mind? How reach his perceptions, which in themselves were rendered so obtuse upon every subject but that of his profession? The ten thousand noble and generous shames that rise to the honest heart, at accepting obligations from those it is impossible to love, were quite lost upon him. With his usual bluntness, he said,—

“You accepted my time, which is far more valuable to me than this paltry sum of money, and why will you not accept my money? I assure you it cannot put me to the slightest inconvenience. I have more money than I know what to do with. Do not make a scruple about it.”

“My scruples,” said she, after a considerable effort to speak with composure, “are those of habits of thought, of which I must, perhaps, now for ever take leave. It is true, sir, this obligation must be added to that load of obligation under which I lie to you. My mother’s funeral, as you justly told me, *must* be provided for. I thank you, sir, very much; my uncle will, I am sure, repay you as soon as ever he arrives.”

“What is it?” said he, looking at her; there was a coldness she could not conquer in her manner, which shocked and grieved him. “What is it? what is it that displeases you, Miss Wyndham? Anything I have done? anything I have said? I sincerely beg your pardon,” he continued, approaching her with much anxiety in his tone and manner; “my wish has been to serve and assist you. Have I neglected anything you wish to have done?”

“You are only too kind, sir,” was all she could bring herself to say. There was something in his manner that touched her; she felt ashamed of her own injustice and ingratitude. Had she known what he was about to do, she would have felt still more discontented with herself.

He was going to meet Rile that evening, and with the determination to put more than half his own hard-earned fortune into jeopardy, rather than that she should be disturbed in this moment of distress, while her mother lay dead in the house. And yet, such is the unavoidable effect of inattention to the feelings of others, which his unfortunate education had made almost habitual to him—but in which most of us men more or less offend—that he was forfeiting all the regard due to this noble and generous kindness, even at the very moment he was contemplating it.

He now again took up the signed draft, which had been

lying all this time upon the table, and, with an air of more gentleness and solicitude than he had till then assumed, again tendered it to her acceptance.

But her hand refused to advance to receive it. She *could not*; something, an invincible something, withheld her. He, however, was not to be thus baffled; he actually took possession of the small, delicate, white hand, pressed the note into it, gave one fervent pressure with his thin, almost skeleton fingers, raised it to his lips, imprinted a kiss upon it, and immediately left the room.

She stood as one petrified, the paper in her hand. Could it be possible? Was it a dream? Could she in truth be a beggar—a dependant upon charity for bread—a dependant upon the charity of Mr. Danby!

She thought she knew—she tried to feel sure—that her uncle, though a very mean and covetous man, would have too much pride not to discharge this obligation. And then, in spite of herself, came a feeling of relief in possessing the money. The dreadful destitution, that horrible panic which possesses the *penniless*, she was at least relieved from. The bread for her family and the expenses of her mother's funeral were provided for; there was amply sufficient till her uncle should return.

To this feeling of security was soon added the recollection of what he had said on the subject of Rile, which, in the hurry of her feelings, she had scarcely given attention to. She now recollected, with a sensation of relief inexpressible, that he had promised to secure her father from further disturbance for the present, so as to allow them both a little breathing-time. She began to reconsider, with pain, the coldness, the more than coldness, of her conduct—the feeling, almost of repugnance, with which she had met his kindness. As is often the case in such circumstances, this sentiment of irritation and almost capricious dislike died with the presence of its object. He had been gone but a very short time, before she felt almost remorseful for her behaviour; she longed to see him again, and by her gentleness and gratitude make atonement for it. She began to look round for some excuse for speaking to him once more.

Then she recollected the blank cheques he had locked up in the drawer,—a mark of confidence she felt that, at all events, she ought not to accept. She felt a nervous fear lest they should get into any other hands; she might be robbed of them, they might be misused,—it was impossible to keep them.

To return them would furnish an opportunity for speaking with him.

She left the room, and went into the hall, hoping to find him in the breakfast-room; as she passed the hall-door, two men went by upon the carriage-road,—it was the bailiff and his follower. Her heart leaped within her. Was it possible? Were they gone? Had he found security for the debt?

He had taken the whole of it upon himself. But this she did not learn till long afterwards.

He was not in the breakfast-room; but, through the window which looked upon the terrace, she saw him walking alone, lost, as it would seem, in a deep reverie, his hands behind his back, and his eyes bent upon the ground.

The breakfast-room sash-window opened to the ground; she threw it up, and, holding the signed drafts in her hand, went up to him.

He was so absorbed in thought that he did not perceive her till she was close beside him, and very timidly said,—

“Mr. Danby!”

He started from his reverie, saw her; the accustomed flash of delight passed over his pale and serious face, as he exclaimed,—

“You, Miss Wyndham! Do you want anything with me?”

“I come,” said she, blushing, stammering, and the tears almost in her eyes, “because I think I must have seemed very, very ungrateful to you in the library. I am so unhappy that you will, perhaps, excuse me, for so very, very ill expressing what I ought to feel—what I do feel. I am very sorry; I hope you will forgive me.”

“Forgive you!” he said, coming up to her, taking her hand again in his, and regarding her with a look of ineffable tenderness, which, in her confusion, she fortunately did not perceive. “This to me! Were you condescending to say all this to me? Can you doubt that to assist you—to oblige you—is the highest pleasure of my life, the only pleasure I ever tasted in my life?”

She was full of her own ideas of what she had and ought to say; she was blind to the rapture which spoke in his eyes at that moment.

“I am exceedingly obliged to you,” she went on, “for what you have done; and though, at first, it *did* give me excessively great pain to accept money from you, I am sure you will understand my feelings. I now feel how considerate and friendly it was. Those two horrid men, too—they whom you have sent away—I do not know how to thank you; but these,” presenting the cheques, “you must allow me to return. I do not want them; nothing should tempt me to abuse your confidence by making use of them. Will you take them back, or shall I tear them?”

He looked more than ever pleased with her. He had been accustomed to regard women as a set of extravagant, rapacious harpies, who preyed upon all the men weak enough to trust or to indulge them. This delicacy, now he came to understand it, delighted him more and more.

It was a very coarse view of things, you will agree with me, which could lead a man to be very much delighted with such a simple act of propriety as this. But Mr. Danby, like most of those who have a very low opinion of human nature, had taken a very partial and imperfect view of woman's nature especially.

Her delicacy, however, could not make *him* delicate. He pressed her to keep the cheques.

"There is no knowing what you may want, and I cannot have you distressed. Indeed, I cannot allow it. Till Sir Herbert's return, you are under my care. I consider myself as your guardian and protector. Is it not so?" he added, pressing the hand he held.

She did feel, at that moment, as if he were what he said—a guardian and protector, standing in the place of her uncle to her. His age, which to her young, impertinent imagination, seemed quite venerable, prevented her attaching that meaning to his words which his too fond and foolish heart was in secret doing.

She withdrew her hand, however, and, taking hold of the cheques with both, said resolutely,—

"It must be so!"

And tearing them into four pieces, presented him with the fragments; which he with a vexed look took, and tearing them with some impatience into a thousand morsels, distributed them to the winds.

"I must leave you to-night," he said, addressing her as they walked side by side towards the house, "for business that must be attended to demands my presence in town; but I shall return again in the course of a few days, to finish much that it will be necessary to do here: in the mean time it is my advice to you to *get over* the funeral. Let it be done in a proper manner, such as you think your uncle would approve. You will find yourself relieved when this is all at an end, and more capable of attending to your father's affairs, the management of which, in all probability, will devolve upon you. From what I can learn, there is every appearance of your having to sue out a statute of lunacy."

"Good Heavens!" cried she, flinging up her hands; "good Heavens, Mr. Danby, do not use such shocking words! I cannot bear them. One thing after another!—oh! where is all this to end?"

And she burst into an agony of tears. He was shocked and sorry, and kindly begged to know if he had hurt her.

"Hurt me!" she cried impatiently. "To use such an expression—how horrible! My poor father! he is only very ill, and now you would deny him the use of his reason! It is quite barbarous!"

He looked as if he thought she was losing the use of hers, so excessively astonished was he at this outbreak. He however only said, and with some dignity,—

"When I am speaking upon matters of important business, it is always my custom to call things by their right names. The delicate feelings of ladies are perhaps sometimes hurt by such proceedings, but I thought Miss Wyndham possessed a courage above her sex. Yes," said he with severity, "what I tell you is the plain truth—it is extremely likely that Mr. Wyndham

will be altogether deprived of the use of an understanding he has so horribly *mis-used*; and justice will require that his affairs shall be taken out of the hands of a madman, and placed in those which will administer them so as to save, if possible, from ruin the numbers of miserable creditors who have trusted him. I, for my part, never did, and never will, mince matters. It will be the best thing for all parties if his present fever lays him on the shelf, *legally*, as the poor incompetent creature he has long morally been. Your tears"—for she was weeping bitterly—"your tears, Miss Wyndham, might be shed to better purpose than upon this occasion."

The pitiless, bitter, unrelenting, merciless advocate of legal justice spoke in these tones. Yet, let me add, the *foundation* of all this man thought and did was invariably just and right—could he but have tempered his rectitude with pity, his plain speaking with gentleness, his severity with mercy.

But this he could not do. Even to her he loved he was merciless and hard as iron when he thought she was in the wrong; he could not pity or sympathise in the feelings of the pious child, anxious to hide her father's shame and infirmity. He thought only of the faults and follies of the man, not of the natural tenderness of the daughter, and was indignant, as if she had been defending vice.

He looked quite angry, and took two or three turns up and down the terrace, while she, overcome with her emotions, had sunk upon that green seat where so many happy hours had been spent.

He came up to her again, but his tones were not much softened as he said,—

"I am very little used to be with women. I believe they always cry *excessively* when they are vexed or contradicted. I am sorry to see you crying in this manner, because I told you that which it was proper you should understand; and, for my part, I think it very weak not to be able to look difficulty in the face, and, when the thing is so, to cry because one is told plainly that so it is. I thought that you had been of a different sort, Miss Wyndham, and not one who would 'drown business in tears,' as somebody said. But the sex are all alike," he added impatiently, for she really could not stop crying.

She had been controlling herself so long, and with such effort, that when once tears forced their way, they came in torrents. Indeed she was quite hysterical for the moment, but he knew nothing of such things.

He took two or three turns, and came up to her again. She was still crying, and her bosom heaving with the passion of her emotion; she was only just mistress of herself enough to keep down the loud hysterical cries which were struggling for utterance.

He looked at her with a sort of half-angry, half-wondering attention, and then took another turn or two. His absence assisted to recover her. When he came again, she had ceased

crying, had wiped her eyes, and was rising to return to the house. Her knees, however, were trembling, and she could hardly stand; he saw this, and offered his arm, but she refused it by a gesture, and made the best of her way to the hall-door, he following her.

In the hall the butler met them, to ask at what hour Mr. Danby would like to have his dinner. He said that it was quite indifferent to him whether he dined or not; he had to walk down to the village below, and should not be back till five o'clock: too late he thought for dinner.

Then Emilia's heart smote her again; she came up and said she hoped he would take some refreshment before his long journey; that any hour he would mention his dinner should be prepared for him; adding,—

"I shall have the honour to attend you at dinner, sir, if you will give me leave."

And so saying, she left him, and went up stairs to her sanctuary—her mother's chamber, where, her arms stretched round, and her head resting upon, her mother's coffin, she wept as much as she pleased.

CHAPTER X.

But if, the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, all sorrows end.—SHAKESPEARE.

WHAT a contrast!

A letter from Spain. It was addressed to her mother, but she opened it.

It spoke of nothing but brilliant actions, wonderful achievements; the great Captain and his astonishing enterprises; of all the romantic incidents of that most romantic war, in that most romantic country; of mountains, valleys, splendid monasteries, secluded nuns, restless Guerillas, gushing streams, and fervid suns.

Touched by the hand of a master, all these things lived again upon the close-written pages. She perused them, her eye brilliant with pleasure or blinded with tears—the fervid imagination, the manly enterprise, the splendid temper of the writer, were impressed upon every line. His image rose as might the sun, chasing away all the heavy clouds of depression and despondency that rolled around her.

Then there was—"Tell Emilia this"—"Make Emilia understand that"—"I wanted Emilia here"—"Emilia would have described this far better than I can do it"—"Bid Emilia make me a song for such a valley, a lament for such a ruin."

Emilia!—Emilia!—the letter was full of it.

Then the Oaks—but here it was all pain again: with what tenderness he spoke of the Oaks!

"That terrace that I was puppy enough to ridicule—how inexpressibly dear has absence made it to my heart! that sweet

green terrace, those heavy green trees—the soft, misty, blue sky of loved, beloved England—how inexpressibly beautiful do they appear in my dreams! My dreams! awake or slumbering, dearest aunt, how are they filled with the Oaks and you!”

The Oaks!

Ah, never, never should they together sit at the Oaks again! All those sweet remembrances which made the place so inexpressibly charming—that hallowed every walk, every turfy seat, every hanging tree—peopling them, instead of the fawns or fairies of the olden world, with all the beloved domestic enchantments of the present—with that image, so tall, so graceful, so beautiful—and with the deep, earnest, feeling countenance of the mother, her protecting angel! The Oaks!—hallowed spot, filled with sacred memories!—where she had hoped for life to dwell—which thought had often peopled with children of her own, whose laugh had sounded sweet as the wild bird's note to her imaginative ear! Those woods, the haunt of all the wild denizens of nature, whose forms and notes she so delighted in!—all, all must go!

She must be an exile, and a wanderer, and a vagabond, and a beggarly dependant upon the face of the earth, said black Despair.

Ah, not so! not so! whispered Hope.

She knew the heart in which she trusted; she knew it well. Sooner or later he would return. With the plaintive tone of Jacques, in that most pathetic drama, her heart repeated, “I know he will come again!”

She had carried the precious pages to her mother's room, and, kneeling by the bed on which the coffin lay, she had there read and re-read them, while the balm gushed over her poor wounded heart, and life, and hope, and strength were imbibed at every word.

It was in an effusion of a tender kind of congratulation, if I may use the word, that she pressed her lips upon the silver plate that bore her mother's name, and seemed to call upon her for sympathy in her innocent joy. Rapture it might have been called, this first taste of joy, after all she had endured. The letters in her bosom, her beautiful hair now once again arranged, her dress changed, her countenance refreshed, like the unhappy king who rose from the earth he had watered with his tears, and again took hope and comfort, at five o'clock she went down into the breakfast parlour, to pay what she thought the respect due to Mr. Danby, and join him at dinner.

He was sitting by the fire reading a newspaper when she came in; he just lifted up his eyes, looked at her, and resumed his reading. The occupation in which he had been employed had not been quite so cheering to the spirits as hers.

He had found only fresh reason for apprehension and disquiet in every disclosure that had been made by Mr. Rile, and quitted that gentleman's office, equally disgusted with his villany and the inconceivable infatuation of his patron. Her refreshed and

almost beaming look was in as strange contrast with his present feelings as with the state in which he had last seen her.

He was as little pleased with the effect as he would have been, could he have divined it, with the cause. As it was, he considered it only as a fresh proof of the levity and inconsistency even of the least faulty of women; and his good opinion of the sex was certainly not increased by it.

Yet he could not help admiring her in spite of his ill-humour, and stole many a glance over his newspaper, as she sat, apparently studying a hand-screen which she held between herself and the fire, and thinking of the monastery of Alcobaça.

Dinner was announced, but he did not again offer his arm, so she walked alone, and he followed, into the dining-room, where an elegant little meal was prepared for him, at which she did the honours with a charm and a grace which would have softened a harder heart than his. They did not talk much, for, in truth, he had never much to say, and she was little inclined for conversation. After dinner was over, and the servants had left the room, she made as if she would rise and go away.

"One moment, Miss Wyndham," he said.

She resumed her seat. He rose, and changed his place; he had been sitting opposite to her, at the end of the table—he came and sat down near her.

"Miss Wyndham, you will perhaps allow me—unlucky as I am in my mode of expressing myself so as not to wound your feelings—to say a few words to you before I go away."

"I have been wrong, sir," she said, with more serenity and cheerfulness than he had seen before, "very wrong and very ungrateful; where the intentions are so very kind as yours, surely it is most ungenerous to be so susceptible as I have been. But something must, and, I am sure, will, be forgiven to a daughter's feelings, and, may I venture to say so much?—if you could—if it were possible to spare my poor father a little—I should be deeply—immeasurably—obliged to you."

The man of business could little understand all these refinements, these cryings, and displeasures, and asking of forgiveness, and all that sort of thing; in truth, he had not yet quite recovered his temper.

He looked at her with an expression that might have discouraged an angel, but she thought she had been wrong, and she would not be so discouraged.

She held out her hand with great sweetness, and said,—

"You will not forgive me, I see; I suppose you cannot help feeling offended; but, when I am so greatly obliged to you—"

He took her hand, pressed it under his upon the table, and, while he held it prisoner, said, in a low tone,—

"By Heaven, you are altogether an angel! and whatever you bid me do I shall do—and bid me feel I shall feel; for you are goodness and sweetness itself, and I am an old, drivelling, worm-eaten law-book of a fool."

But seeing her start, and look surprised and terrified,—

"I will have done with this absurd nonsense, E— Miss Wyndham, I beg your pardon—I am very little used to the company of women—yours has been to me like the possession of a new sense. But I am now going back to my old life—and what I live for I am sure I do not know, for it is not to live as I pass away existence. You ask my forgiveness, and I ask yours. And now," said he, abruptly stopping himself, and letting go her hand, "let us talk of business—the only thing," he muttered, "such an old, dust-dried skeleton as I am is fit for."

He then told her that he had seen Rile—had put things into the best situation that the time would admit of; but that the business would be long and protracted, and would require much care and thought to bring it to a tolerable issue; but that, having undertaken it, he had resolved to go through with it.

"And you need not fear," he added, "that dreadful addition to this kind of evils—lawyers' bills."

He told her that he had ordered his chaise to be at the door at seven o'clock (it was now past six); but that, in the course of a week, he should be probably down again—once more, but in softer tones, advised her to finish the celebration of her mother's funeral, without waiting for her uncle; and to make herself easy, and attempt no further change or disturbance till he should arrive.

"I know," he added, "you will be anxious to discharge servants, and diminish the expenses of your housekeeping. This is quite worthy of a mind so just as yours; but let me advise you to make no changes till I come again, which shall be as soon as I can possibly command the time.

"And now," for the chaise was heard rolling to the door, "I take my leave for the present, Miss Wyndham."

And before she could speak a word, he had taken her hand, and again kissed it. The noise of the clattering steps of his chaise was heard, the door shut, the horses galloped off; and so they parted.

CHAPTER XI.

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes
How diversely Love doth his pageants play,
And shows his power in variable kindes.—SPENSER.

THE lawyer pursued his solitary way—his heart still vibrating, his imagination still filled with the image of the sweet creature he had left—her gentle voice, her soft and almost tender air as she asked his forgiveness. Forgiveness from him! and for what?

Absence is like death. It summons the hardened conscience to account; it recalls all the bitter words, the unkind looks, all that we have spoken, all that we have done, under the influence of irritation, and that irritation passed away. But here, far

happier than with death, we can efface, we can atone. But what shall efface or atone when the cold, helpless image of the departed looks upon us with its melancholy and reproachful eyes, and reminds us of unkindness or neglect that can never, never be repaired?

Mr. Danby was a rough, and rude, and certainly far from a good-tempered man; but he had not a hard heart, and he had, strange as it might seem, a very impressible imagination. His memory filled with the image of the lovely being with whom he had spent this memorable day, he ran over all that had passed between them. He recollected with remorse, not so much the rough things he had said—for of what he had said he had, indeed, but a very imperfect recollection—but he recollected that he had felt angry, irritated, offended, and he marvelled at his own cruelty. Her mother dead in the house! her father deprived of reason!—and he had dared, he had found it possible, to take offence at anything she could do or say! He looked upon himself as the greatest brute in existence; and as his regret and repentance increased, so did her image present itself with fresh charms to his distracted eye.

He longed to return, to throw himself at her feet, to tell her—only to tell her—how he adored her loveliness and sweetness, and to supplicate pardon for all he had done amiss. His imagination went no further; he only panted to tell her that he worshipped her—that was the utmost extent to which the humility of his passion aspired.

He was not at all more easy till, his thoughts taking another turn, he drew out all the papers he had put into his pocket connected with the case, and, by the light of a clear, full moon, endeavoured to spell them out as the chaise rattled along. A word here and there was all that he could make out, but this was sufficient to give the cue to his thoughts, and he was soon lost in reflections upon the best course to be pursued with regard to her affairs. He had already put a very considerable sum into jeopardy to secure her from present interruption, but he never thought about this; he never, for one second, looked upon her as under obligation to him for this: when he had been hurt at her, it was because he thought she did not feel for all his worry and anxiety on her account—he never once thought of his endangered thousands.

A few hours brought him home to his chambers in Chancery Lane.

It was still dark, and his drowsy clerk, who had been sitting up for him, looking as rusty and as miserable as possible, with his slovenly dress and dingy face and hair, ushered him into his little, dark bedchamber.

What a contrast did this close, squalid apartment form with all that he had left! The unwholesome closeness of the air—the dirt of the discoloured hangings—the little, dusty glass upon

the deal table, covered with an old towel—all his clothes lying about in disorder—what a contrast to the Oaks!

He had never in his life cared for or thought of such things before—never even seen them. Now the miserable destitution of all that could make life lovely, in which he lived, struck him, yet he never thought of its being possible to alter it; he only associated all this with the idea of himself, and it seemed to make the distance between him and the sweet object of his passion only the more immeasurable.

Heavy were the sighs which broke from his oppressed heart, as he sat down in the old rush-bottomed chair that stood before his ricketty table, wearied in body—for this was four o'clock in the morning of the second wakeful night, and the day had been one of great and anxious exertion—and depressed in mind. It would be difficult to describe the deep depression into which he fell.

He was quite alone; for his clerk, having opened the door, and ushered him in, had retired immediately to his bed, and the solitude and the silence were only broken by the drowsy call of the watchman—"Past four o'clock on a rainy morning"—and the ticking of his alarm clock by his bedside. One flickering tallow candle threw its scanty and disagreeable light upon the apartment, adding gloom to gloom, and uncertain shadow to shadow, upon this grim and uncomfortable scene. His thoughts went back to the past; all one pale, colourless representation of a life without pictures, without sensations, without pleasures, almost without ideas—*dry* as a law dictionary!

The dreary waste was broken only by the events of two short days, bright as the wing of the bird of paradise, and evanescent as that glowing form amid the dewy shades. He looked forward, and what was there before him? The same arduous toil—the same laborious exercise of thought on words, and technicalities, and forms—the very driest and most arid state of things—that was to be the food of his fancy,—a fancy which had just been called into life to yearn and clamour for more. For his heart no hope, no love, no tenderness, no warm and genial glow: death, the confined dead, had as much of life and spirit-stirring bliss as he could hope for.

Solitary he had lived, and solitary he was to die. He should see her once or twice more; he *must*—business would render it indispensable—meet her once, twice, thrice more. There was something yet sweet in existence left, even for him; and when that was over—what?

Why—the dim chamber, the piles of papers, the musty packets, the points of law, and the cold solitude of the grave.

This was the first time he had ever been brought to such a rumination on life. His busy days had been followed by the deep sleep of the night; he usually closed his eyes with some unresolved point or other in his head, and opened them in the morning to occupy himself with the same thought. He had

been devoted—alive only to his profession, and he had become quite the most eminent man in that branch of it which he occupied.

I do not know whether he had ever felt any very particular gratification from this; certainly, as I have told you, he cared little about the money which it brought into his purse. He was too much immersed in the details and technicalities of business to have time for vanity, luxury, or ambition.

I should doubt whether such a man as I am now describing could be found, at the moment I write, within the circle of the profession. This sort of blind abstraction from life—this devotion to professional objects, from habit and a peculiar turn of mind—this abnegation of all the luxuries and pleasures, which it seems now with men the prime object of all their efforts to obtain—was the result of certain systems of education and ways of thinking, which have altogether, I should imagine, passed away.

It is, in most respects, probably better as it is. Yet *my* fancy dwells with interest upon all characters thus *disinterestedly* devoted to a pursuit, without regard to the advantages or profits to be earned. There is a simplicity of purpose, a disregard of personal happiness, an earnestness of devotion, which, unreasonable as it may be, touches and interests me. This very clever, astute lawyer is to me, in this view, like a child.

And now he languidly and wearily rises, and begins to prepare for bed. Sigh—winds up his watch—another—looks at the hour—another. Do you not see him? his countenance has as little expression as usual—he can only sigh.

And now he has fallen into an uneasy slumber; but soon the benign fancy wakes, and begins to weave her forms instinct with life and beauty. She is there, bending over him, with that angel smile of sweetness and candour, begging his pardon. And he starts and wakens—he is in tears!

CHAPTER XII.

Fantastic, frolicsome, and wild,
With all the trinkets of a child.—CORTON.

THE funeral is over.

The grave has received that warm and earnest being—the mother has been returned to the dust—and Emilia feels more than ever alone.

The house, while tenanted even by the lifeless remains of her whom she had loved so dearly, and who had loved her with a passion stronger than death, had not seemed desolate. Awful and melancholy it was—but not desolate.

Now she walks through the silent chambers, round which the

mournful blasts of a chill evening are roaring, seeking, as it were, the image that is gone.

She does not weep; she goes gravely and quietly along—alone.

Her father was sunk into a state of half-insensibility: he does not seem to suffer, but he is only half-alive. All the unavoidable bustle and disturbance of that funeral-day have failed to arouse him in the least; from time to time he had taken the refreshment she had ministered, and had sunk again into his doze.

The medical men, however, had pronounced that he is not in any immediate danger; indeed, that there is every reasonable probability that he will recover; but Mr. Finch, good and sympathising Mr. Finch, had an expression upon his face while he said this which was anything but cheerful. She was struck with it, but, considering the circumstances around her, merely received it as a proof of the affectionate sympathy of one whom from babyhood she had looked upon as a friend—and she had thanked him in her heart for it.

He had better reasons for his gravity than she could surmise—happily for her.

The following day one affectionate being came to comfort her—a consolation she had little expected, for she was not aware that Sir Thomas Hesketh's family had returned to Haldimands.

She had only just finished a late breakfast, when she heard the sound as of a light carriage coming up to the door; the bell rung—the door opened—and her child, her Lisa, flew into her arms, and covered her pale face with her affectionate kisses.

It was a wintry day, and the beautiful being was all muffled up in the most delicate furs, and satins, and velvets. I don't know how, but she was quite the most beautiful heap of elegant and soft-looking things, and the sweetest little face among them all, that could well be imagined—beaming it was with tenderness and affection; and, as she kissed Emilia a thousand times, the tears were streaming over her face, and wetting the pale cheeks of her friend.

It was some time before that voice of music could find words to utter, in interrupted pauses, mingled with her sobs—

"My dear, dear Emily!—my friend!—my mamma!—poor Emily!—poor, sweet Emily!—how pale you are, my Emily!—how ill you look, my Emily!"

All this breaking-out mingled with a flood of tears and caresses.

While Emilia, her arms clasped round her, and pressing her fondly to her bosom, answered, from time to time, by her calm and earnest kiss upon that pure and spotless forehead, and those waxen, weeping eyelids.

It was a lovely picture—for the one was tall and nobly formed, and her features marked, and almost severe in their outline, and the other was small, delicate, and pliant as the tender sapling—as she twisted her arms round her friend's slender waist, and hid that loving and most exquisite countenance on her shoulder.

When the first emotions at this meeting had subsided, they sat down together in the large arm-chair, Lisa's arm hanging fondly round Emilia's neck, and they began to talk together.

"And how kind and how good of you, my sweetest Lisa, to come to me so soon!" she said, stooping down, and kissing her forehead again; "I did not think you would have come down to Haldimands till Christmas."

"Oh!" began Lisa, impetuously, "it was the most gracious piece of good luck that ever was. Mamma got into a quarrel at Bath with our landlady—she was not a landlady, but a lady—a friend of mamma's, who let her have her house; and there was a quarrel about a piece of china, which mamma, you must know, let fall—that is, it fell to pieces in her hand, you know, for mamma vowed that it was cracked before; and Mrs. O'Brien swore—she really did, Emily—that it had not the least blemish in it, and that mamma should pay the whole value of it, and mamma vowed she would not; that would have been to own she had said—you know what," she added, looking up slyly in Emilia's face. "And mamma went into one of her—humhums, and so there was such a quarrel! and so mamma vowed she would not stay one single moment longer in Mrs. O'Brien's house, if it stood empty, and she had to pay rent for a century; and so, thank Goodness, down we came to Haldimands, and I am with you, my precious, darlingest Emilianas."

Emilia pressed the prattler to her heart. She could not, at that moment, do as it was her custom to do, tell her where she was wrong, and what was wrong, in that which she felt and said. She felt obliged at the moment to let it pass.

"I am sure," she said, fondly, "you are the dearest and kindest of little Lisas to come to me so soon; and Lady Maria was very, very good to let you."

"Oh, as for mamma," she said, colouring a little, and hiding her head on Emilia's arm, "she—she doesn't know very much about it."

"I hope, my loved one, you have not come without her leave—you have not been so naughty; tell me, Lisa," she added, bending down her head to the little wilful face that was now again hiding itself on her shoulder.

"Should you be very, very, very, very, excessively sorry that I was naughty?" at last she said, looking up with a little, meaning smile; "or would you," she muttered, hiding her face again, "have rather I had waited, and come with mamma in the coach and four?"

"Naughty, naughty Lisa!" muttered Emilia, bending down to the averted head; "you know I never wish you to do wrong, even to come to me in my distress. My love, you should not; but how was it—"

"Oh, it's not very bad neither; you know mamma is so fussy and whimsey."

"Don't, Lisa!" said Emilia.

"Well, I won't; I know it plagues you: I won't. Well,

mamma is—you know how; and so I knew if I asked her to let me run over to you, she would say, 'I am going to call upon Miss Wyndham, as soon as it is proper, and I shall take you with me.' And so said, so settled, and no more to be done; and to want after that to come by myself would have been nonsensical indeed. You know mamma *has* no more feeling for others than this floor," she exclaimed striking her pretty foot upon it.

"Oh, Lisa!" said Emilia.

"Well, I do beg *your* pardon, Emilia. Well, where was I? Oh! so I went to papa—you know he's a dear, old, foolish, good-natured, pompous, puffy papa—and so I threw my pretty arms, just this way," she added, clasping them in a sweet, childish manner round Emilia's neck, "just this way, and gave him one of my sweetest kisses. You know, Emilia, nothing *can* resist me. And I said, 'Horrid old man, you must do me a huge favour!' and so he pinched my arm—I vow it's blue yet. He is so rough, papa. And he said, 'What do you want, you little minx?' and so I begged the little curricule, and for old John to drive; and the dear old fellow granted my request in a twinkling. Did you ever know him refuse me anything, Miss Emilia? And then I ran to mamma, and said, 'Papa had desired me to go out with John, and try the new curricule, and take the air, as he thought I was looking rather *palish*;' and so she was trying on a new turban—what a fright it was!—and so she was too busy to care much about my doings, and so I took my opportunity—and here I am."

But Emilia could now only look grave.

"My Lisa! if it were possible, you have made me quite sorry you are come."

"Oh! don't be that—don't be that," said the pretty child beseechingly; "was it so very, very naughty? What was the harm of it? Don't look like that, Emily! Mamma Emily, don't look so grave."

Her dark blue eyes were now fixed beseechingly on those of her friend.

"Dear Lisa, you make me shudder for you. That sad deceit, my love!—have you forgotten all our talking, and all your promises that you never, never would play such little, contemptible tricks again?"

"But this was such a little bit of a trick! and so *very* white a lie, that nobody but you, Emilia, could, I am quite sure, see it. Papa was very glad I should get the air, and I dare say he did *think* I looked palish; for you know he is always thinking I look palish, or thinnish, or delicatish, when I am as healthy as a wild kid."

"Ah, Lisa! Lisa!" her friend exclaimed, shaking her head, "if I had the spirits and exertion which, alas! I have not just now, I would not let this pass so. My child! my dear child, Lisa! remember your promises to me."

"Well, I'm sure I keep them in *general*. Indeed I do, Emilia, but this was such a *very* great temptation,"

"Nay, my love, don't talk so; the excuse is worse than the fault."

"Well, that I don't see," said the little one, resolutely. "I think to come to a friend in affliction is excuse for anything."

The young preacher stooped down involuntarily, and kissed her again.

But then, recovering herself, and the slight gravity, almost severity, of her youthful countenance returning—severe, and youthful, and beautiful, at once, as that of the cherub who gave "the *grave* rebuke," she said—

"Let us say no more of it now, my dear Lisa. I see you will not be convinced. I leave you to your own good evening thoughts. My Lisa can always see what is right *after* it is done. She must not let the warmest and best of hearts blind her to it *before*. Let us talk of something else."

Quite subdued by her gravity, the little creature impressed upon her hand a sweet, submissive kiss, and there was an end of that subject for the time. They sat in silence for some moments, the younger leaning her head upon the shoulder of the other, gazing, however, upon the pale cheek, which was a little turned from her, for Emilia seemed lost in thought.

At last Lisa said—

"You are very, very pale, Emilia."

"I have suffered very much," was the reply.

"Ah, Emilia! if you loved your mother as I love you, it must almost have broken your heart to part with her."

And she pressed her affectionately in her arms.

"It has," said Emilia in a low voice.

"What a dreadful, dreadful thing it must be! How awful! how solemn!" said this beautiful being, lifting up her eyes, and her whole countenance filled with a kind of holy terror.

"Ah, my Lisa!—and sooner or later we must all stand by that bed on which our dearest lie; and, sooner or later, we must all lie there ourselves. I could have wished," added Emilia, in a low tone, "that you could have been there. It would have been dear to me to see those kind tears falling upon her coffin, and it would have made a great impression on you, dear Lisa! You would have been very, very much afraid to offend God, after you had seen the dead who are gone to Him, Lisa!"

There was a profound silence.

"My Lisa, let me have the comfort of thinking, that my sorrow may be as your sorrow in this,—that my grief may make you serious and thoughtful, Lisa."

"Yes, Emilia; it does make me serious and thoughtful; your grief makes me very sorry; and then your goodness, and your composure, with that pale cheek, and that calm, serious face, and the tear in your eyes—but no more. No vain lamentations, no passionate sobbings and faintings, as I should do, if you died, Emilia. I suppose," she added, in a little timid whisper, "you had thought a great deal, and tried to prepare

yourself, and to bear it with fortitude and resignation, as you used to talk to me—oh! of, in comparison, such little things; and now I see your goodness, and your religion, and all that, which I used to think a little, wee bit too much, Emilia. It has stood you in good stead."

"It has," said Emilia. "Think of this, my Lisa, when you think me a little, wee bit, too,"—and she smiled upon her with one of her grave, wintry smiles.

"I will, indeed!—I will, indeed, Emilia! I will be quite good from this time for ever, and never do the least thing in the world that you would not approve. I'll promise you solemnly—"

"No," exclaimed her friend, putting her hand over the rosy mouth,—"no promises. Shall we go out, and take a turn upon the terrace, for it is dry and pleasant, and this room gets hot?"

They were soon walking arm in arm upon the terrace.

"This is such a pretty terrace!" Lisa began; "and I often think what a sweet place that grove there would be for you and your lovers, Emilia, to walk in."

"Stuff!" said Emilia, rather contemptuously.

"Well, you never *will* let me talk about your lovers; and I am sure nobody but you talks of anything else—even mamma! She thinks more of admirers and lovers than I should, I am sure, if I were as old as she is. By-the-bye, I think she had a very great mind to run away with a lover of yours the day we were last here."

"My dear Lisa," said Emilia, "you know how excessively I dislike this sort of vulgar, school-girl talk."

"Oh, dear me!" said Lisa, heedlessly; "well, I really thought you were going to be married to him; and so, perhaps, you are, only you won't trust such naughty little things as me with your secrets."

Emilia coloured, but said nothing.

"You *couldn't* refuse him, he was such a charming, handsome, clever-looking creature; and I am sure he was excessively in love with you. Do you know what he was doing all that long, prosy dinner we had here last time? Really, it *was* very prosy to me. I don't like such *very* sensible young men as that Colonel Lenox. What's the use of being in the army to be so grave and wise? Well, he talked of nothing but my school-days. My school-days, forsooth! 'Thought I, pleasant talk for a young lady! At last I saw him glance at you; and oh! methought, Miss Emilia, you were my mamma in those same school-days."

Emilia smiled, and this speech she did not quite seem to think such vulgar nonsense.

"And then, after tea—oh! I was so provoked! I thought to have seen him all attention to you, and to have plagued you well; or that he would have flirted with me, and seen you look so vexed and so jealous. And then mamma must lay hold of him, with her great—, and it was impossible you should be

afraid of *her*. Do you remember how you and I paraded after them, like two *souvantes* in a French tragedy after Queen Berenice, or Clytemnestra, or some of those old harridans in love, and those cubs of beaux attending us? And they with not one word to proffer to our beautyships, and that most extraordinary quiz that walked by you? Now, if you call me vulgar again, I will beat you; but never believe me, if that curious old piece of goods was not in love with you—verily he was. I had heard before of an oyster in love, and *then* I saw it, —ha, ha, ha!”

Emilia turned away, half angry, half disgusted.

“That gentleman,” she said, “is a very clever man, and very much esteemed in his profession; and he has been so exceedingly kind to my father and to me, that I beg you will not make game of him, Lisa.”

Lisa looked a little frightened. She always did when Emilia spoke with that tone and manner.

So she said nothing more, but took hold of Emilia’s hand, and began pinching and pulling her glove, and playing all sorts of tricks with it.

And, at last, she said,—

“But I *did* think that Colonel a very, very handsome, charming man; and I wonder—do you ever hear from him?—for they tell me he is gone to Spain.”

“Sometimes we have letters from him,” said Emilia.

“Oh, Emilia!” she exclaimed, after another little pause, “would you grant me the greatest, greatest favour in the whole world?”

“Why, Lisa, how could I refuse it?”

“Will you let me hear the least little bit of one of his letters to you?”

“They were to my mother, not to me,” was the answer, in a low tone.

“Then you are not engaged to be married to him?” cried the other, briskly.

“No.”

Lisa said no more; she walked along by the side of her friend, pulling now at the fingers of her own gloves, and seemed lost in thought.

Her meditative moods, however, never lasted long; so, after a while, she lifted up her pretty head, and said,—

“Well, I never *was* so deceived in my whole life! but aren’t you going?”

“Going! What do you mean?”

“Going to be—”

“My dear Lisa, you must know that you are asking questions you should not ask.”

“But I am so excessively curious, because I was so sure he was in love with you, and one does not like to be in the wrong; and I think, as I am your very best friend in the world, that you might give me—a notion”

"How can I do that? How can I know myself?" broke from Emilia.

"Well, I thought people always knew themselves when men were in love with them. I am sure mamma—"

"My dear love," said Emilia again, seriously, "how can you let your head and tongue run so upon this subject! Don't you remember how we used to hate those vulgar Miss Folletts, at school, who were always thinking and talking of lovers? I am quite sorry, dear Lisa, to see you so full of such nonsense."

"Oh, dear me! nobody I know talks of anything else. I am sure my governess would entertain me from morning to night with her conquests, if I did not clap my hands to my ears, and run away. Dear Emilia, if you go on in this way, you will die an old maid."

"Very probably," was the sober answer.

"Very probably—ha, ha!" she cried, frisking about her like a young kitten; "dear Lady Sobersides! Well, if that Colonel thinks like me, he thinks you the handsomest, prudesomest, cleverist, dearest, beautifullest, wisest angel in the wide, wide world; and he's a fool and an ape if he doesn't; and that old oyster who does is worth ten thousand of him; for he would want eyes to see, and ears to hear, if he was not in love with my own, own Emily!"

Thus the young, playful, and heedless creature prattled away.

Wild and thoughtless as a little bird—totally unschooled, except by the gentle hand of Emilia—surrounded with all those innumerable temptations which belong to a gay and beautiful creature such as she was—the only daughter of a man of large fortune—and with a dressy, vain, coquettish, violent-tempered mother, whom she could neither love nor respect—that temper must have been naturally sweet indeed which could preserve so much warm and generous affection, and a heart so free from pride and vanity as belonged to her.

Her excessive beauty was perhaps in her favour; she had been so accustomed to be admired, that she really thought and cared very little about it. She was too giddy and careless to mind anything, perhaps, but amusement, and had too warm a heart to be gratified with what never yet had touched it. Of all the many admirers who, young as she was, pursued her, she cared for not one. The only two persons she loved were Emilia, to whom she was most tenderly devoted, and her father, who, proud and pompous as he appeared, was, at the bottom, a very foolish, good-natured man, and who, long indifferent to his fashionable wife, was wrapped up in the love of his sweet little daughter.

CHAPTER XIII.

How happy is he born and taught,
 That serveth not another's will;
 Whose armour is his honest thought,
 And simple truth his utmost skill!—SIR H. WORTON.

THE visit had done Emilia infinite good.

It was like a return to life and light, after her melancholy and anxious occupations, thus to be once again with this dear little companion of her brighter days, and to receive all the testimonies of her warm and artless affection.

The very anxiety with which so many things that had dropped from the pretty, prattling lips, had filled her, served to occupy her mind, and to relieve her from the mournful circle of thought in which, almost as in some magic circle, she seemed to be involved.

In the mean time the hours slipped away.

"Time and the hour" passed on, though at a heavy pace, with her.

She had to receive the visits of condolence of all the neighbourhood,—this was a painful ceremony.

There was a something ill-concealed in the manners of most of these visitors, the majority of whom did not exactly belong to the great world, and had not learned the best thing, perhaps, to be got in that world—habitual politeness and self-possession. There was a something which made her suspect that the secret of the family affairs had escaped, and that the equivocal position in which her father stood was beginning to be known.

There was a sort of compassion—a condescending kind of compassion—in the tone of many of the visitors, which underbred people are too often apt to apply to money disasters. The fall of their neighbour sets them at once upon a pinnacle; and to be richer and greater, after all, than the long-respected family at the Oaks, filled many a mind with a fresh accession of dignity.

She bore all with true magnanimity.

She had observed the world, young as she was; she knew the value of reputed wealth, and she was prepared for all those "spurns" in adverse fortune which our great poet enumerates among the reasons for making men out of love with life.

When Lady Maria, accompanied by her daughter, made her formal call, she who had never been cordial was coldly and haughtily indifferent; and showed by her manner how immense was the distance she intended in future to establish between herself and the fallen family at the Oaks.

But not so Lisa.

The intelligence had reached her; it is a sort of intelligence which common minds always seem to spread with particular pleasure, while with many groans and lamentations they take care to exaggerate it.

Not so Lisa.

She would not believe it; she declared, her face red with passion, that it was all an infamous falsehood. *She* knew the Wyndhams well! And, she was sure, Mr. Wyndham was a very pleasant man, and Mrs. Wyndham a very clever woman, and Emilia the most charming girl in the world; and she was positive there was not a word of truth in the report, and she was quite certain it could not be so. And, in confirmation of all these excellent reasons for incredulity, she fell into a passion, and quarrelled with every person who took pains to undeceive her. She was one who belied the maxim of La Rochefoucauld—there was something in the misfortunes of her friends *altogether* painful to her.

She was excessively naughty the day she called with Lady Maria; she could not endure her mother's way of speaking to and treating Emilia, and shewed her resentment in a manner which very much increased the embarrassment and disagreeable feelings of her friend.

Emilia was in an agony all the time lest there should be an outbreak: for the young lady, who did not value her mother's anger in the least, and who was to the last degree obstinate and headstrong when she thought herself in the right, gave such very undisguised demonstrations of the opinion she entertained of her mother's manners, that even the well-bred Lady Maria could scarcely refrain from taking notice of it.

Her dislike and coldness to Emilia, most innocently the cause of her daughter's behaviour, seemed to increase every moment she sat in the room. It was an excessive relief when the visit was ended, and mother and daughter rose to go.

Emilia could not help looking her distress and disapprobation as, while the mother was making her cold and formal adieu, Lisa flung herself into her arms with almost an affectation of passionate attachment; there seemed, indeed, as much desire to vex and offend her mother, as to comfort and support her friend, in these caresses.

Emilia could distinguish this—but it was not this which gave her pain; she knew it was only another form of misguised but generous attachment and indignation. Her grief arose from anxiety for the ardent being thus unrestrained by any well-regulated principle.

She pressed her to her heart with a gesture which Lisa understood well enough.

But the more she loved and valued Emilia, and the more she thought her in the right, the more angry she was. She had never been properly taught to respect, if she could not love, her mother. That holy commandment—like, alas! all the other commandments—had been learned in her catechism, but never applied to her heart till she met the kind young mistress.

She was too young, and had been too short a time with her, to triumph over the effect of long neglected and previous bad habits of thought; she effected much while they were together, but the impression too soon wore away.

The following dialogue, which took place in the coach, will, I trust, shock the most part of you, as much as it would have grieved Emilia.

"Upon my word, Miss Hesketh," said the mamma, her colour bright with passion, "your conduct is most extraordinary. May I be favoured with knowing what was intended by all those ill-bred insinuations with which you were pleased to make my visit intolerable to all parties?"

"It was not my fault, ma'am, if the visit was intolerable; I am sure I found it the most disagreeable visit I ever paid in my life."

"You took care to make it as disagreeable to other people as it was to yourself. I really do think you are the rudest, most underbred girl, I ever met with."

"I can't help it, if I am."

"What do you mean by that? How dare you?"

"Oh, nothing at all, of course. But there is one thing," she added, crimsoning with passion, and tears of rage in her eyes, "that I never will bear—to see a fallen friend insulted."

"How dare you say such a thing? What do you mean?"

"You did—you did! Oh, I understand it all quite well! And she felt it—I saw she felt it—poor Emilia! Yes, I saw, though she has an angel's self-command and dignity—I can't think how you could have the heart to do it."

"Don't *you* me—I'm not going to bear this from my own daughter."

"You oughtn't, then, to drive your daughter almost mad. Miss Wyndham this, and Miss Wyndham that, when it used to be sweet Emilia and dear Emilia—because you think she's poor!" she exclaimed, in a passion of tears; "but she shan't be poor!—she isn't poor—and I wish she was an empress, that she might trample upon us all!"

"Have done, then!" said the mother, with a threatening gesture.

I will shock you with no more of this. These things have been—these things, I fear, still sometimes are.

Alas! we shall have to follow the fatal effects of such a rearing, and of such habits, upon a fine young creature's fate.

One other visit shall be slightly recorded, because it shows the delicacy that flows from a kind and simple heart. Not the clever Mr. Danby, not the passionate and devoted Lisa, could give, or did give, such sweet comfort to poor Emilia, as did one little thought of by any one—the young man they called in the neighbourhood Johnny Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox had been brought up, as many then were, and some still are, at a commonplace school; and his father, a country gentleman of small estate, had not thought of even sending him to the university; for, as Johnny was an only son, it was not intended that he should be of any profession. And to educate a youth well, for the profession of a *gentleman*, was not thought so indispensable then as, I am happy to say, it is beginning to be thought now.

So young Wilcox, having imbibed and forgotten as much Latin as was usually acquired in such seminaries, and learned to write his own name, and spell his own language—and this was about the sum of his accomplishments—returned home to pursue those rural sports which were the passion of his heart.

A passion for rural sports is, by the highly-advanced inhabitant of cities, usually regarded as the strongest proof of an ordinary and degraded mind, fit for nothing else; but this is often a very short-sighted view of the case. A passion for nature—a deep, imaginative passion for her wild scenes and solitary beauty—very often lies hidden under the rough coat of the fisherman, the velveteen shooting-jacket, and even under the scarlet coat—though the scarlet coat has more of the show and vanity of life in it, and is often, though not always, the covering for that vulgar and most unpoetic feeling, the love of fashion; the same may be said of the *battue*.

But the solitary or one-companioned sportsman, who travels over the breezy champaign, or penetrates the deep, dark thickets, the game serving as an exciting aim rather than as the main enjoyment of the toil—or the fly-fisher, under the pendent oak, pensive and silent, bending over the clear, crystal, pebbly stream, and watching the many-spotted trout gliding amid his moss-covered recesses—or the man enjoying any other of the innumerable forms of the romantic chase—may be blamed by the really tender philanthropist, or ridiculed by the man of the world, but he is no unimaginative brute, and very rarely a fool.

In such employments, wholesome, healthy tastes, and many sound and manly virtues are exercised. Nature—wild, beautiful, romantic nature—never speaks to the human heart altogether in vain.

And so it was with Johnny Wilcox.

His passion for rural sports was the passion of a poet, who never read half a dozen lines of poetry in his life; but the great mother spoke to his heart, unknown even to himself, and purified it by her own kind and benignant influences. His love and admiration for Miss Wyndham exceeded description; her blooming cheek, her animated air, her vigorous, healthy, and graceful form, was to him as the Diana of the woods he loved. In a drawing-room, he was half afraid of her. In spite of her easy politeness and unaffected grace there, he could not help feeling awe-struck, awkward, and something uneasy in her company; but set them both upon horseback, and he was perfectly happy.

On horseback, he was graceful, and at ease as well as herself, for he was, of course, a capital rider; and she, who rode as well, was to his fancy the perfection of beauty; while he had the exquisite delight, for the moment, of feeling equal to and at ease with his charmer.

It was pretty to see Miss Wyndham riding with her father, and Mr. Wilcox at her side. Mounted upon one of the best horses, and looking one of the handsomest young fellows in the

neighbourhood, he knew his advantage, and rode gallant and protecting along, through the bosky glades and dew-dropping branches of an autumn morning, in a state of enjoyment it is given to few to know.

His adoration, for it had not hope enough in it to constitute a passion, was met on her side by a very sincere liking; it had all that genuine warmth of that genuine *liking* in which it is felt to be impossible that any more dangerous feeling can mingle; and I can assure you that, in my opinion, there are few things pleasanter in life than such likings.

Young Wilcox was associated in her mind with all those deep and bowery lanes—those fragrant, health-breathing heaths—those pebbly brooks and nutty thickets, that she so delighted in; and she felt something of the same fresh and cheerful pleasure in his devotion and his society.

He, like the rest of the neighbourhood, had heard the disagreeable rumours afloat with respect to the state of Mr. Wyndham's affairs, and he, like the warm-hearted Lisa, was deeply, deeply grieved.

Till the funeral was over, he felt that all intrusion upon Miss Wyndham's privacy was impossible; he contented himself, therefore, with riding in person every day into the stable-yard, to inquire how Miss Wyndham and the family were.

The second day, when he had been sitting idly on his beautiful hunter, waiting for the usual unsatisfactory message,—“Miss Wyndham's thanks and compliments, and Mr. Wyndham is much the same, she herself tolerably well,”—he had seen a very ill-looking fellow, with a pipe in his mouth, lounging at the kitchen-door.

When the groom returned with the message, Wilcox said,—

“Who's that ill-looking scoundrel, John? I didn't use to see him among the servants. You should be careful who you let into the doors while the master's so ill.”

“Oh!” said John, who had the greatest possible regard for Mr. Wilcox, for reasons both of sympathy and others more solid, coming up to the side of the horse, laying his hand upon the animal's neck, and speaking in a low voice, “we do not know much of him. There's another of 'em in the house—I wish we were well rid of 'em. It's a hard thing for poor Miss Emilia.”

“Why, you don't mean,” cried Wilcox, surprised for the moment out of his propriety,—“you don't mean—” looking expressively at the man.

“But I do though,” said John.

Mr. Wilcox said no more, but rode away briskly.

His visits of inquiry were repeated every day, but, as we know, he did not see the ill-looking face again. He had, however, drawn his own conclusions.

Two days after the funeral he presented himself at the front door, and was admitted.

He thought, as he rode along, that nothing was so easy as the task he had proposed to himself.

He was too sincerely grieved and anxious for Emilia to feel his usual embarrassment, and he found himself, as we all have done at moments of crises, suddenly relieved from the shackling forms and restraints of society, and restored at once to truth and nature.

But as the hall-door opened—as he descended from his fine horse—as he entered—as the door closed after him, and he was ushered into the well-known breakfast-room, he was like the knight in the enchanter's castle,—all his old, discouraging, and depressing feelings of timidity fell upon him.

She was not in the breakfast-room—so there was time, while he waited, for his trepidation to increase; and his knees became feebler, and his colour higher, at every step that seemed approaching the door.

At last she entered, in her deep mourning dress. The beautiful colour he once thought so lovely, all gone—her face pale, her animated eye dimmed, her gay and cheerful expression grave and calm.

She held out her hand to him with a smile of affectionate pleasure, while he grasped hers, unable to speak, and the tears, in spite of all his efforts, brimming to his eyes.

The weakness was infectious—her eyes soon ran over; and the first effect of their meeting was to have a good cry together. They sat a little while so, till Emilia said,—

"You loved and honoured my mother, Mr. Wilcox, and you will be among those who lament her most sincerely."

"I did honour that lamented lady, Miss Emilia. She was a great deal cleverer and wiser than I, poor fellow, could ever appreciate; but she was the kindest of friends to me from a boy, and if I am not quite so bad as I might have been, I owe it to her."

"She was one," said Emilia, "whose great abilities were always employed to promote the real good of those she loved—and she had a great regard for you, Mr. Wilcox."

"Miss Emilia," said he, fixing his eyes upon her face, and assuming a very grave and serious air, "am I going to take the greatest and most inexcusable of liberties? Mrs. Wyndham had a regard for me—to believe it is the greatest pride of my life; her esteem has led me to hold myself in some esteem, and preserved me from many things that would now have been bitterly regretted. I owe it to her that I am not a brutal, drunken sot—unworthy to sit in the same room with you, Miss Emilia."

The simple tribute went warm to her heart, and her countenance showed that it did.

"Miss Emilia," he began again, and he hesitated and coloured, "you are extremely clever and extremely penetrating too, and I think you know my heart—if," with increasing courage, "you do know my heart, you know that I would rather be trampled under foot by wild horses—I would rather cut off this hand, and fling it in the fire—I would rather perish—than offend you."

"Indeed, Mr. Wilcox, I believe it," said she, a little surprised at this exordium.

"Then you will not believe—for you are as just as you are clever—that in what I am about to say, however ill or improperly I may express myself, I *can* mean anything to offend—anything but what the deepest respect might lead a man to say—"

"I am sure you will never wilfully offend or hurt any one, Mr. Wilcox; but, if there is any danger of it—"

"I had better not go on, you were about to say—perhaps so—but as what I am going to say may be of some little use to you, and can hurt no one on earth but myself—as it may make you hate *me*, but cannot harm *you*—I will say it."

She began to feel a little alarmed, but she was not prepared for what was coming.

"Miss Emilia, certain reports"—looking another way from her, indeed almost turning his back upon her—"have reached me. I do not presume further, except to say, that my life—you have long known *that* was yours, and to spend it for you and yours at any moment would be my glory—but that my fortune is at Mr. Wyndham's disposal. If you would make a good-hearted, humble-minded fellow—whose sole happiness has been in your *sisterly* friendship, Miss Wyndham—proud and happy beyond the expression of human words, you will treat him like a friend, trust in him like a brother, and—and—make use of him."

"My dear Mr. Wilcox," she said, touched beyond words at the delicacy of his tones and gestures, and contrasting them, in spite of herself, with the roughness of Mr. Danby,—"*I* should be an ungrateful wretch, indeed, if I did not meet this kind and generous friendship as it ought to be met—with confidence. It is too true, things are not here as my father's sincere friends must desire; but the present pressure—the only difficulty which can lead any person of common honesty to take advantage of the generous kindness of his friends—is, by the interposition of a very able man of business, removed. If it had not," extending her hand, "as frankly would I have accepted your assistance as it has been generously and delicately offered."

He turned round, took the hand she held out, gazed with an air of tenderness and reverence in her face. It was impossible for love, respect, and admiration, to be more beautifully mingled, and said,—

"For the *present*, you said. May I ask, is it only for the *present* removed?"

"I do not know—I cannot tell—"

"Then, Miss Wyndham, I hope I have at least manliness and self-command enough not to disturb you in these serious hours with my weakness and my feelings. I have always made one resolution, not to mar the happiness I *did* enjoy, by aspiring to that which was never intended for such as I am. But only this much—there is one man in the world devoted heart, soul, and

being to you ; whatever betide you and your father, there is one who will never, never fail you. I ask nothing—I hope for nothing;—your own fine mind and generous heart will teach you what it must be to me to be able to do something for you. You will not deny me this one mark of esteem, if you want it?"

"I will not. We understand each other well, I believe, Mr. Wilcox. You, probably, can read my heart, as, I think, I read yours; the generous friendship you profess for me is fully returned, and the sweetest moment I have yet known since my mother died, I owe to you."

His heart glowed within him.

"Yes," she said, her heart glowing too, "your delicacy—your kindness—your generous regard—have comforted me more than I have words to express."

He was no fool, Johnny Wilcox—and no coxcomb: he understood all that this speech conveyed, and he was not puppy enough to take it for more.

He rode away grateful and happy, his heart lightened of a load of anxieties, fears, and generous but hopeless wishes. And she went up to her father's bedside, knowing that there was one good, and kind, and feeling being to whose assistance she need not fear to have recourse.

CHAPTER XIV.

She doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow,
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace.

The Muse—G. WITHERS.

A FORTNIGHT had thus slipped away.

Mr. Wyndham was slowly recovering his strength, and had been removed to his arm-chair.

But there was something about him that she could not quite understand, and which gave her great uneasiness. His delirium seemed to be over,—indeed, he had always been aware of the presence of those about him, and never made mistakes with regard to them. For a time, however, it had been impossible to communicate with him, to penetrate his mind, or make him aware of any ideas you wished to convey. This had gone off, and he was again capable of receiving new impressions. He had been made aware that his wife was dead, that the funeral was over, and that Emilia remained, a most tender and assiduous nurse, devoted to his recovery and comfort.

But he was changed. She felt as if he were hardly the same man. He had always been pettish and unreasonable, and was certainly neither a very wise nor a very considerate being; but this was far different from what he was now.

His pettishness had changed to the helpless crossness of a whining sick child; his whole attention seemed absorbed by his personal comforts, and he was exacting and unreasonable to the greatest degree. Nothing was too expensive or unattainable to be the subject of his longings; and nothing could be more querulous than his lamentations when what he desired could not be procured. His whole attention—such power of it, at least, as seemed left—was absorbed by himself; he did not seem to have a perception of what was due to any other creature. His imagination seemed occupied with one picture alone, namely, that of Wingfield Wyndham—the most unfortunate and the most justly to be pitied of human beings, whose sorrows it ought to become the sole business of the human race to assuage.

Such is the wretched state into which mental disease may reduce a man. It remains to be proved whether those who have used their faculties well and worthily while they had them can, even in this state of fatuity, ever become so thoroughly selfish and unamiable. I would hope not. As our native character and acquired habits are said to display themselves in our dreams, so I would fain believe that something of their native worth might still linger and be discovered amid wrecks and ruins such as these. But I will not affirm this. Such excessive patience and inexhaustible indulgence is required towards these unfortunates, that I would not diminish the pity their unhappy condition ought to inspire, by the reflection that it is, perhaps, partly the result of former ill-discipline and selfishness. Only let us hope, that for the really generous and good to fall into such a moral state is rare.

His daughter flattered herself that this peevishness was merely the result of sorrow and illness, and that it would disappear in time. She cheerfully applied herself to attend upon and entertain him, met his grumbings with a pleasant excuse, his lamentations with the kindest sympathy, his disappointed wishes with regrets, and his peevish complaints against herself with a good-humoured smile. He was not *quite* insensible to all this; for he showed, even in the midst of his ill-humour, an affection for his daughter which he had never seemed to feel before, clung to her like a child, and was never happy without her.

Fortunately, as he dozed and slept a good deal, she could often leave him under the care of Biggs, and, sallying forth by herself, enjoy the rapture of the woods.

It was a mild November, and they had not yet lost all their charms. The grave and pensive beauty of the declining year still hung upon the sear and crimsoned branches. Her relaxation was to stroll among the walks with which they were intersected, to visit every rocky glade and hanging thicket, and in some deep recess to sit down on one of the sylvan benches and read—

His letters.

She had got them all—she read and re-read—she knew every word by heart—but still she read again.

The syllables seemed to convey more latent meaning; the “*Emilia*” seemed to speak and promise more every time she went over them. There was a certain tone of recollection and affection through them all which could not be mistaken.

The newspapers, too, were perused with the most ardent curiosity; and though his name, and the name of his regiment, seldom appeared, yet he was of the army, and that was enough.

And then, under the present excitement of her feelings, it was natural—was it not?—that she, nature’s poet, should find in her numbers a companion for solitude. Poetry, to those who have any ear for rhythm, is the natural expression of any high-wrought feelings. It a very great mistake to fancy poetry an artificial mode of pouring out the heart; the history of every poet that ever lived would assure us of the contrary.

Don’t be frightened; I am not going to waste any of her effusions upon you. You would only make a face, and turn over the page; though, I assure you, if I had indulged you with one or two of them, you might have been the better for it—for they were full of simple, truthful, tender, and pathetic feeling, and coloured and adorned by an imagination which, unspoiled by false and affected styles and fashions of writing verses, had fed alone upon nature.

Such as they were, they were certainly written down, and, according to the custom of most youthful poets, preserved—though in rather a careless manner, just as they were scribbled, on broken scraps of paper—and locked up with her letters in her writing-desk. This solitude, and these reveries, were, however, dangerous for her heart. The impression made by Lenox was considerably deepened by such solitary musings,—no mother near to shake her head, or, with more anxiety than ever she suffered her countenance to express, engage her in some reading or some employment, which would dissipate her thoughts as much as possible.

Thus passed the time till Mr. Danby came again.

This meeting was on both sides far less agitating and disagreeable than the last. Her father was able to receive him, and to converse, as best he might, upon business. This unpleasant occupation did not fall upon her.

Mr. Danby came, intending to stay for two days, during which time he never once addressed her upon the subject of affairs. He was very much and seriously engaged during the greatest part of the day, and only suffered his deeply thoughtful brow to relax, and his severe eye to assume a softer expression, when he sat with her.

She, on her part, was most anxious to show him every attention. She made his breakfast and his tea for him; she sat with him at dinner and some time afterwards, talking to him, or reading the newspaper to him; for, having once offered to read a passage, he had seemed so rested, happy, and comfort-

able, while she was so employed, that, in mere gratitude and good nature, she had repeated the task.

At tea-time she met him again; and, while she presided at her tea-table, her talk was very pleasant, for she only thought of showing her thankfulness for the evident fatigue and vexation he was undergoing, by diverting and amusing him, during his hour of relaxation, as much as lay in her power. This placid mode of life passed on unheeded by her, for she thought of him only as of a respected friend of her father's—one a century older than herself, and of whom she only wondered that she was not more afraid. But it was not so with him.

The peaceful happiness he was now enjoying exceeded everything he could have imagined in his most ecstatic dreams. The wild throbs of passion, under which he had found himself such a poor distracted victim, were now at an end. There was nothing to excite his feelings—nothing to disturb hers. She was all calm serenity and cheerful good sense—he at ease, and no longer embarrassed by his shyness, awkwardness, and want of the habit of company. He enjoyed this *tête-à-tête* without any alloy; he did not speak much—he did not feel the slightest desire of making himself agreeable—he was too entirely absorbed in the pleasure of sitting with and listening to her, even to think of himself, or the impression he might make. The idea of pleasing her was, indeed, far too high to be within the scope even of his wildest ambition.

All he desired was to be near her.

And he was near her, and the two days lengthened into a week, and his society became a sort of pleasure to her. She felt so secure and safe in his hands, that she began to find considerable satisfaction in the thoughts of coming down to make his tea, and to sit and chat and read the newspaper.

People came and went. The little routine of every-day life went on.

He continued to be occupied with business, and not Mr. Wyndham's business alone, for his other papers of more urgent nature had been sent for, and had followed him to the Oaks; and when the toil of the day was over, and the hour of meeting approached, he, who had been too busy to think about it, too much occupied even to anticipate it, received it as we receive the unbought blessings of nature—a smiling sky or a refreshing breeze.

His life was all calm and peaceful delight.

I repeat it myself, I dwell upon it. The heart rejoices in this pause in the midst of his desolate existence—this blissful paradise in the waste of his dreary life—these few brief hours of a happiness not one in ten thousand could have tasted as did he. The heart—even mine—cannot dwell but with pleasure upon this prospect—

In spite of all that followed—alas!

CHAPTER XV.

Her hair

Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
When twilight makes them brown, and on her cheek
Blushes the richness of an autumn sky
With ever-shifting beauty.—LONGFELLOW.

You should have seen Emilia and Mr. Danby sitting at tea, or, rather, after tea—the shutters shut, the curtains closed, a bright fire blazing in the grate; she, employed in working at a beautiful dress that she is embroidering for her Lisa—and he, in his arm-chair, lingering, and finding it impossible to rise and return to his work in the study.

Now taking up the end of the delicate crape in his bony hand, and holding it, and looking at it with a sort of wonder, such as an intelligent savage might feel at beholding, for the first time, some beautiful work of art. But there is more there than the beauty of those soft and delicate colours to fascinate his attention, while he holds it, and pores over it with his half-shut eyes. A sort of magnetic attraction seems to pervade it.

While she, half amused, half flattered, but not the least in the world aware of the true nature of his feelings, talks and smiles with that sweet, quiet smile—the only smile that has been seen upon her lips since her mother's death.

His love, which had been admiration, tenderness, attachment, and a host of sweet, unintelligible feelings mingled, has, during the last few days of his stay, begun to assume the form of one of those deep, ineffaceable passions for which men have been known to sacrifice life, and—far more than life—honour, reputation, and all that renders life dear.

Here was a man entirely without the habit of conquering or controlling his feelings,—for feelings strong enough to demand control he had never experienced before,—brought up, as he had been, by a mother with whom I shall soon have occasion to make you acquainted; his mind had never been enlarged or cultivated in the slightest degree; he reflected little either upon himself or upon any of those great questions of religion and morality which ought to occupy the thoughts and attention of every rational being.

Devoted to law, reared in that narrow circle of technical ideas in which the mere study of law involves the mind—his very Sabbaths no days of rest for him, but most often employed in bringing up the arrears of the week—his intellect never roused to the consideration of those great principles of eternal justice and right on which law ought to be based, but employed in disentangling, or in fencing against, all the intricate questions founded on the construction of words and phrases, which the imperfection of language, or the imperfection of our legal language, entails;—his mind, as I believe I have said before, far

from becoming enlarged by the practice of life, became narrower and narrower every day, though his intellect upon this one matter had acquired an almost preternatural acuteness.

And yet Nature, it is evident, had intended him for no such man. There was a depth of feeling, a strength of imagination, lying unexcited within, which the life he had led might smother, but could not destroy; and which, called at length into being, burst forth with a force that would almost have overpowered one far more accustomed than he had ever been to comprehend and guard against the violence of his own feelings.

The frequent sighs that would heave his bosom, as he sat thus holding the magical piece of muslin in his hand, might have alarmed her, had she not been unconsciousness and inexperience itself in such matters. There was only one heart in the wide world whose love she desired to obtain; there was only one being whose words and looks were weighed and dwelt upon with interest. With regard to all the rest of the race of man, she lived in that artless, unsuspecting ease which gave to her manners their peculiar charm.

It was during Mr. Danby's stay at the Oaks that Emilia received the following letter:—

"DEAREST OF EMS,—Here is an event! Guess. I give you—like that old Mother Sevigné, in my French exercise upon the celebrated letter—ten million of guesses, and I'll swear you won't guess right,—you won't come within a million miles of the truth. *Je vous le donne en deux, je vous le donne en trois, je vous le donne en mille.* Do you recollect what a blundering business I made of that detested letter?—six exercises I had on it before it was right. I abhorred the very name of Sevigné. I little thought how it would serve to round my periods at this most extraordinary crisis of fate. Well, you haven't guessed, have you? Turn over the page, and see!

"Why, what do you think they've made papa—dear, old, good-natured, pompous daddy!—well, this heaven-born minister of ours has made him—what?

"Don't swoon—don't go into a fit with surprise—why, they've made him an—

"AMBASSADOR!

"There's for you!

"You don't believe me—I see you don't. Don't be impertinent, miss; papa is a very influential man—he has a thousand votes, I believe, in the House of Commons. No, I believe that's not it—thousands of votes out, and some little snug boroughs and things—oh! I am becoming quite an adept in these matters. Well, I don't know what else he has got, or what else he has not got, but he's got to be an ambassador.

"And to St. Petersburg.

"We are going up to town immediately—that is, mamma and I, for papa has been in town these ten days; and I am to be presented before I go, and come out—though I'm only sixteen next birth-day; and it makes mamma so mad! She thought she had me safe in coop for one other season, and, lo and behold! I'm out!

"Oh, I'll make mischief among them all at St. Petersburg—see if I don't!—and I'll marry some grand Russian prince—Prince Ruffamuffapuffaslowski. Don't you see the princess coming walking up to you in a grand London party?

—you'll only be poor little Mrs. Colonel Len—don't beat me—hanging on your husband's arm, with maybe a paltry bit of a red ribbon just peeping at his button-hole, and a miserable *Sir* as a handle to his name; and I shall come up to you with my grandee—all sorts of sheep-skins, and two-necked eagles, and dragons, and Georges, and Michaels, and monsters, adorning his breast, and covered from head to foot with stars and garters; and you'll look so humble and so afraid, and I shall be so sweetly condescending!

"I think I see mamma and me among all those great white Russian bears, gaping at Madame l'Ambassadrice! There she goes, all glorious, with her great black eyes and her great bare shoulders; and then comes after her, I—mincing and smiling, and all muffled up in furs, and downs, and laces, and tipped, and nipped, and showing only the least part of my nose. And the bears wonder what this little, comical-looking creature, wrapped up in this way, is that's coming along: and they say, 'Who can this little piece of goods be?—she must be as old as the hills.'

"And so I am," I cry, with a scream of laughter; "I'm mamma's mamma,—ha! ha! ha!"

"Don't shake your head, and put up your finger, and purse up your nice mouth, and look like a prude. It won't do, Emilia—I'm as wild as the winds!"

"I think, if they'd make me a coach of thistledown, I'd fly to the Orcaes.

"I'm sure I was changed at nurse; mamma's child ought to have been a big, hobgoblin, strapping, six-foot girl. I'm sure I'm Queen Mab's child; I seriously am quite sure I am, I am so full of mischief.

"However, I'm not quite gone to the Orcaes yet. And now I come to the dolorous part of my letter.

"About coming to see you—I WILL come and see you—do you think I'll go to the world's end without taking leave of you? Never think of it. Mamma has been in a huff ever since our last visit, and she told me to-day, while we were quarrelling about it, that you had a great deal too much influence over my mind, and that, if it was not for you, I should not be so disrespectful to her.

"I thought I should have burst with rage! I was quite in a blaze, and should have gone up like a sky-rocket, if I had not been quenched in quite a passion of tears. What shameful injustice! and so I told her. I told her that it was false, and that it was you who were for ever telling me to be good, and showing me my duty, and saying that, however bad our parents might be, we ought to love and honour them because they are our parents.

"And then wasn't she in a fury?—and I said, as well as I could, for I sobbed like a fool, that it was her own fault if I did not love her and honour her, for I couldn't.

"I thought she'd have thrown her book at me, and dipped under the table—but it didn't come.

"What a shame to take my Emilia *en grippe* in this way!—the best and only friend I have in the world!—the only person that ever scolds me, or tells me I'm wrong—that is, in the right way—for, to be sure, mamma does her duty as far as scolding goes.

"Emilia! who's always taking mamma's part, till she quite makes me jealous and angry! Emilia! who is wisdom and goodness itself. Ah, Emilia! what do you not owe to *your* mother?

"But where was I? Oh! she says I shan't come and see you again, and I say I must and will—and there the matter rests; but never believe me, if you don't see me pop in one or other of these mornings."

"MY LISA,"—wrote Emilia back,—“how unhappy you make me! My dear, dear Lisa, how can you be so wrong! Your letters are nothing but pain to me—not because you are wild as the winds, as you say—that, perhaps, is quite natural

for one so young and so happy as you are—but how dare you, my Lisa—how dare you write of your parents as you do? How dare you quarrel with your mother? It makes my very blood run cold when I hear of so unnatural a thing—so horrid a thing—and done by my darling Lisa! I will not quarrel with you for ~~your~~ speech about me, for that was a blunder of your honest feelings; but only reflect what a rude, improper speech to any one, much more to your own mother. No wonder Lady Maria hates me, if this is the way you represent me to her. I must appear like a hypocritical, mischief-making meddler, professing to teach you what is right, and encouraging you in all that is wrong; but when you are in a passion, my Lisa, you are like a little mad thing, and never know what you say.

“As for coming to me without Lady Maria’s consent—that I must positively forbid.

“I could have no pleasure in seeing you so, and you ought to have no pleasure in seeing me.

“No, we must give that up—indeed we must, my Lisa. It makes me feel very sad to think you are going so far and far away; but I hope you will write to me, and tell me all that is in your foolish heart. Perhaps your friend may be able, now and then, to give you a little sober advice, and temper Queen Mab’s spirit with some of her own gravity.

“For me, laughter and joy have taken leave of me—I—but I will not trouble you with my affairs or anxieties—I do not very well know how things are going on. Mr. Danby is here, but he does not say one word to me upon the subject. When I know my fate, you shall know it, and I am not afraid the Princess Ruffamuffapuffaslawski will ever forget her friend.”

Two days after this letter, as Mr. Danby and Emilia were sitting quietly at breakfast, the door opened, and a little figure, dressed in an old woman’s red cloak, came flying in, arms spread, and clasped round Emilia’s neck in a moment, quite unaware that any one else was in the room.

“Done!—here I am—I said I would! I was sure I ought, and here I am, my best of loves and Emmys!”

Emilia could not but press the pretty trifier to her heart—all her principle could not prevent her rejoicing thus to see her once more—yet she was pained and grieved. She kissed her, and then, holding her a little off, looked at the old dingy red cloak and black bonnet which had fallen upon the floor, displaying her beautiful tresses dishevelled round her cheeks and neck.

The presence of Mr. Danby embarrassed Emilia; she did not like to remonstrate, and yet she could not be silent.

“Sit down, my dear, and tell me how it has happened,” at last she said.

The little thing looked round, and now was first aware of the presence of Mr. Danby.

“Oh!” she said, looking as if a little taken by surprise; and, making him a low curtsy, she sat down by Emilia.

Mr. Danby, who scarcely seemed to perceive her presence, tossed off his cup of tea, and, with one of his awkward bows, rose and left the room.

And then it was—jumping up and dancing about in the wildest spirits,—

"I've caught you!—I really have! This is the reason, Miss Prue, you would not let me come! Oh, the darling Celadon! oh, the beautiful, dangerous creature! Never preach to *me* again!"

"My dear Lisa! how can you be so ridiculous—so disagreeable?"

"Oh! I am—am I?" she exclaimed, running on with a torrent of nonsense, evidently intended to stop Emilia's voice, and prevent the expected remonstrance.

"Lisa, my love, be quiet—you torment me!" cried Emilia, almost impatiently. "How did you come here? Nay, tell me the truth—I trust Lady Maria gave leave."

"Don't trust anything about it—and don't talk about it at all—for my coach, like Cinderella's, will turn into a pumpkin, if I stay long. In other words, I shall be found out, which I suppose was what was signified by that delectable fable."

She took Emilia's hand, gazed fondly into her face, and then said, with feeling,—

"If I have done a wrong thing, it is the last I intend to do in my life; henceforth, and for ever, I mean to be as good as good; I shall think of all you have taught and told me when I am away from you, Emilia—believe me, I shall—but to go away without seeing you, and thanking you for all your love and all your care, which I shall remember and treasure up as long as I breathe, I could not, and I would not—and I should abhor myself if I could—and I don't care whether I am wrong or right."

"Ah, that 'don't care!'" cried Emilia, shaking her head.

"I shall be eaten by lions on the coast of Africa, like that bad Harry, you mean. Well, Emilia, I will be eaten by lions before I forsake you."

Here followed a tender embrace.

"But how did you come?"

"Oh! mamma positively refused to let me have the carriage; so I thought first I would walk—and then I thought of the old pony; but then I thought, why, if Philip saddles and bridles it, even for me, he will maybe lose his place—so I am not *quite* so forgetful of other people as you sometimes think, Emilia. Then I thought of Goody Green—that dear, nice, little old woman—that has the little covered cart, and goes to market with her butter and eggs—she is so very obscure, that the thunderbolt of mamma's vengeance could not, I thought, reach her. He who lies prostrate—you know. So I gave her two guineas, and that will pay a year's rent, and I borrowed her little black bonnet and cloak, and she put me down just at the last gate—and there she's waiting to take me up again. Mamma's never down till twelve, and it's only ten now—and so I must soon be back.

"And now," taking her friend's hand again, "give me a promise, a solemn—solemn promise, Emilia."

"What must I promise, Lisa?—tell me that first."

"There is something amiss about money, and all that. You let it out in your last letter."

Emilia coloured,—

"I did not intend it."

"Well, you did—and now for the promise. Promise me, your hand in mine, that you will make a friend of little me—that while I *have* you will never want; and that when you have—if you have no other home to go to, you will share mine. You know I shall be as rich as Croesus—so all the maids and governesses say—and there will be enough for both of us, and in spite of Prince Ruffapuffa I *never* mean to marry—I never do, Emilia! and if you don't marry that Colonel—if he is killed"—Emilia shuddered and started—"No, no, he won't be that; but if, if—he shouldn't after all come and marry you—promise me you'll live with me. We will be like Rosalind and Celia in the play—you shall be Rosalind, and I'll be your Celia. 'So I prithee, sweet coz, be merry.'"

And the tears stood in her two earnest eyes.

"My little love, how you talk!" she said, fondling her; "very prettily, my sweetest Lisa."

"But will you promise?"

"My dearest child!"

"But will you? Say you will. Nay, Emilia, don't be so unkind. Say you'll live with me—we shall be so happy! And don't do—what I am afraid you will do—marry that hideous Mr. Danby."

"My dearest little simpleton, how could such an absurd thought come into your head? Marry Mr. Danby!"

"Stranger things have happened when people want a home. I don't believe matters *are* very bad with you, but your letter made me afraid; and so this was what I came especially for—to make you swear you would make my home your home—and then I'm certain you'll not marry that horrid old Danby."

Emilia smiled.

"Well, I think I might safely promise not to marry Mr. Danby, only I never make promises; but one thing I might almost engage, that if ever I make a home with any one, it shall be with you, my Lisa."

"Promise!"

"No, I won't promise—I said *almost*—that must content your little, generous heart."

"Well, he is the ugliest old fellow I ever saw in my whole life; and I think he'd be ashamed of himself to ask you—and so I don't believe he ever will."

"And I am *sure* he never will," said Emilia, "so let us have done with him, for it is time you should go back, and I will, at least, walk with you to your pumpkin, and go with you part of the way home. I will share in the scrape you have got into for my sake, as you promise me it shall be for the very last time."

It was a bright, crackling, frosty morning—the hoar hanging upon every spray and blade of grass—the sun glancing as upon

so many diamonds—the sky blue and serene—a fair winter day—as the two girls pursued their walk through the woods, till they reached the place where the little covered cart stood. The old woman was waiting for them, and they were soon in, and set off at a good round trot towards the gate which led to Haldimands; there was a near way, not good enough for a carriage, but quite passable for the small cart, and which would bring the little truant safely home in less than half an hour.

Here the two friends parted with many tears—Emilia reiterating her warnings, and insisting upon the promise that this should be the very last act of disobedience that her friend should ever commit; and Lisa, her arms round her neck, and sobbing upon her bosom, promising to be good, and repeating her declarations that she should never marry, and that they would have but one home and one heart, like Rosalind and Celia in the play.

The conclusion of this unlucky escapade was, that the Lady Maria learned all the particulars about it, even to the fact of Emilia accompanying her friend part of the way home.

Her daughter was exposed to a fresh storm of reproaches—reproaches so beyond reason violent, that far from bringing her to confess, or in the least convincing her that she was wrong, the only effect was to rouse her spirit of resistance, irritate her ill-disciplined temper, and provoke her to say much that even she herself afterwards regretted.

As regarded Emilia, the expressions made use of by Lisa in her passion only served still more to impress Lady Maria with the idea that she was the cause and the encourager of her daughter's disobedience. She haughtily forbade all future correspondence; to which command Lisa as obstinately declared she would never pay obedience, and she carried her threat into execution that very night, by writing a letter in defiance, and openly laying it with the other letters upon the hall-table.

But Lady Maria soon proved that she could be as determined as her daughter.

CHAPTER XVI.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill;
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.—COWPER.

WE are now in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, in a small house in that most gloomy part of the town—at that time, it is true, not so completely abandoned as it is now by every one who has the slightest desire to be comfortable, but still dark, dull, and desolate—and it is upon a cold, foggy winter's day.

The room is a small square room, covered with a green and

red Scotch carpet, and surrounded with old-fashioned, heavy mahogany chairs, with black horse-hair seats; a square, uncomfortable-looking settee is at one end of the room, and faces a mahogany book-case, with drawers beneath and shelves above, shut in with glass-paned doors, lined with green silk, and surmounted by a sort of scroll of flourished mahogany. Between the windows is a small glass in a black frame, and under it an old Pembroke table, rather rickety in the legs. Upon the chimney-piece of painted wood—of that hue which painted wood assumes in a neglected house in London—there is not a single ornament but a snuffer-dish and a pair of snuffers.

A black leather arm-chair is wheeled to the fire, which consists of one moderate-sized piece of coal, surmounted by a heap of cinders, half dust, half red ashes—burning in that smoking, unwholesome way which neither warms, nor cheers, nor refreshes the apartment.

In the arm-chair sits an old, thin gentlewoman, somewhat beyond the middle age—perfectly erect—doing nothing. This lady is the mother of Mr. Danby. She sits there, dressed in a black mode silk, once handsome, but now considerably the worse for wear, though it is her Sunday dress. It fits very tightly to her shape, and the sleeves are close as those of a riding-habit. She has a handkerchief of not very white muslin—yellow with age alone, however—pinned over her gown, and a pair of leather mittens on her withered, thin hands, which lie unemployed in her lap. Her face is thin and bluish-coloured; her eyes sharp, bright, and malicious; her lips wiry and thin; her nose high, delicate, and peaked. She might have been once a very handsome woman, and possibly was; she is a very disagreeable-looking one now.

A tall, large, bony woman—nearly as old as herself, more ugly, but not half so ill-natured looking—enters the room with some coal for the fire, when the following dialogue takes place:—

“You need not stir the fire, Susan—it’ll do very well—we don’t want more coals. Take them away again.”

“Why, ma’am, it’s a very cold, dripping night, and when master comes in he’ll maybe like a bit of a blazing fire.”

“He will not come to-night, I dare say; this is the third day I have expected him, and had a supper ready for him. I don’t know what’s the matter, or what keeps him down there in the country, neglecting business, and putting me to all this expense; but I can’t help suspecting he’s entangled himself in a very disagreeable and foolish business; and, if all tales be true, he may whistle for his fees, after he’s worked himself to death.

“I can’t think,” continued she, in a tone of increasing acrimony, “what he *can* be about. I never knew him absent from town for more than two days together before; and as for coming to-night—you may as well send the rump-steak back again to the butcher’s, Susan. He’s not coming, you may be sure.”

"Why, as to the beefsteak, ma'am, it won't be lost; and, really, Williams seems to begin to look as if he didn't like this taking back of things. This is Sunday night—we had best keep it for dinner to-morrow," &c.

But I am not going to trouble you with a description of this housekeeping—these miserable economics—because perfectly unnecessary economics—of a mind occupied with a detail of petty savings, without system or plan—the sole purpose of life seeming to be to save.

All we can say for it is, that the habit had been contracted at a time when the strictest economy was the first duty of life—at a time when she and her husband had begun the world almost without a penny they could call their own, and had to struggle, and did struggle, through it to competence, and even to fortune, escaping all the temptations and dangers of debt, and fulfilling every obligation strictly and honourably.

Such a career is a beautiful sight! The innumerable small daily temptations to be resisted—the virtuous self-denial—the honest sense of independence maintained—the magnanimous disregard of the world's dread laugh. It is beautiful—it is noble—it is heroic!

But, as I once heard one of the cleverest men I ever knew observe, "virtue lies in the medium, vice in the extreme—and every virtue has its attendant vice." The practice of virtues *with* their attendant vices is common—the practice of virtues without them, alone rare, excellent, and beautiful. We have generosity and extravagance, justice and severity, tenderness and weakness, economy and covetousness, walking hand in hand.

How few there are who learn well to consider and watch over the nature and habits of their own minds, and to avoid the evil tendencies of their constitutional virtues!

You will be wearied with my dwelling so long upon this text—self-examination, self-discipline—but the history which I am relating perpetually excites my own attention to the evils resulting from that indifference to the practice of these virtues so common among the bulk of mankind.

Here is a fresh instance of it.

For want of this self-examination—for want of this self-discipline—for want of enlarged views of her own duties and her own tendencies—the frugal, prudent, self-denying, careful little wife became the selfish, covetous, money-loving, grasping old woman. She had suffered her ideas to run upon gold, till gold became the god of her idolatry—her thoughts to be concentrated upon petty details of expenditure, till she could think of nothing else. What had been the first of duties degenerated into almost the greatest of corruptions. The necessity for saving had long ago passed away—the habit was suffered to remain.

Her son had been reared in habits of the utmost parsimony, so that parsimony was become a second nature with him. As

we have seen in the domestic arrangements of his chambers, there was neither art nor luxury about him; there was the self-denial of an ascetic, without its motive or its reward. It was merely a habit.

His mind, however, engrossed from his youth upwards by the contemplation of abstractions, had escaped the corruption of covetousness. He, as I have told you, heaped together untold gold, and scarcely knew that he possessed it. He carried it to his bankers—his bankers' book was kept by his mother—he scarcely ever even looked at it. The habit, acquired while a boy, of receiving all he spent from her hands, she, fond of power and jealous of his independence, had managed to make him retain during life.

CHAPTER XVII.

His wounded ears complaints eternal fill,
As unrolled hinges, querulously shrill.—YOUNG.

It was Mr. Danby's usual custom to ask his mother for money, instead of writing his own cheques upon his banker; and the presentation of the cheque given to Emilia, which, after various delays, had at last reached London, and had this day been discovered by her, when examining the bankers' book, had filled her with peevish anxiety.

Mrs. Danby possessed almost unbounded influence over her son's mind; he loved her—as it seems the nature of sons to love their mothers—with a mixture of tenderness to the sex; gratitude for the innumerable cares paid to their infancy; fondness to the spring from whom all their little infant and boyish indulgences has flowed; and a pious reverence to the grey hairs and wrinkles of a closing life, the best years of which have been expended in their service. The love of the mother is the most universal and the most beautiful feature in the character of man, as to possess it is the crowning glory and supreme felicity of woman.

It tends very much to harden and blight a man's character, when the mother whom he loves and trusts is such a being as Mrs. Danby. There has no sense of moral beauty, there has none of the divine influence of gentle tenderness, none of the high adoration of what appear to him angelic virtues—none of all this has flowed into his soul;—the very fountain from which the finer feelings and the higher tendencies are to be drawn has been changed and petrified at its source.

He loves his mother, but with how poor a love, though it is all his unexcited heart has to bestow! Oh, blest above all the benefactors of their race, those, the lovely and excellent among women, who become the tutelary angels of men!

You must and you ought to feel all the pity for Mr. Danby with which, when I reflect upon all these things, he inspires me

And so Mrs. Danby sits, *doing nothing*, in her chair, in a fit of fretful vexation, thinking that her son will not come, and doubly anxious because this cheque—this hundred pounds, of which she can get no account—sticks in her mind with that impotent, irritating regret with which the covetous man reflects upon money lost that might have been his, or wasted that might have been saved.

In such regrets, in such reveries, without object or improvement, in such vain wanderings of the spirit in forbidden places, how many of our best hours are spent!

"Where can he be?—what can he be about? I never heard him say anything of Mr. Wyndham in my life, except that he went down once before to examine, I believe, into some titles . . . but that is a year ago; and to go down for two days and stay seven, sending for so many important papers—and no one at his chambers but Wilson to answer applications! . . . To be sure there is not much doing just now. . . What could he want one hundred pounds for? I never knew him guilty of extravagance before. Heigho! a mother's cares are never over. Hush! a hackney-coach is coming down the street. No," she exclaimed peevishly, "it's not he—I know he'll not come to-night."

But the coach stopped at the door, and it was he.

As it was Sunday night, it was of no use going, as usual, in the first instance, to his chambers, and he had promised to come and sup with his mother on his arrival in town.

"La, sir!" cried Susan, lifting up her hands with joy, after opening the door and seeing him enter the house, lumbering his time-worn portmanteau after him, "I *am* so glad you're come at last! Mistress is up stairs, and has been expecting you these two hours. You haven't supped? Shall I pay the coach? My gracious! but you look tired enough—put down your portmanteau—there! I'll take care of that—shall I settle with coachy?"

"Yes," said Mr. Danby, with his usual carelessness.

And leaving the unfortunate jarvey to battle with Susan for half-a-crown, instead of receiving his own five shillings, he put his portmanteau down, and made his way up the staircase—illuminated only by the light of Susan's candle from below—to his mother's parlour. There was not much tenderness in the greeting he received.

"Well, you are here at last!" she said, without rising from her chair; "I began to think, after leading the most regular life in the world, and establishing the character for exactitude and punctuality, you were like some others I know—beginning to play the fool in your old age, and running your rigs in your grey hairs."

There was something most excessively grating to his feelings in this speech; but he answered nothing, and, walking up to the fireplace, merely looked upon the chimney-piece, as if expecting there might be letters, and asked if there were any news.

"News! news enough!—that Mr. Danby is gone, nobody knows where, and nobody knows for what, and is not to be found in his chambers. That's news enough for me, and for half the town besides."

"Well, mother, say no more about it. Mr. Danby is come back again. Have you got me any supper?"

"Supper! ay, very likely. Here you, who used to be punctuality itself—two hours," looking at a large silver watch which hung at her side, "two hours after your time. It's well it's not a client, but only your poor mother that's kept dawdling, and fretting, and expecting, and waiting for you all this time. Supper! yes, there's some supper: I suppose Susan will bring it up when it's ready."

He made no answer, but, drawing a chair to the fire, sat down before it, and, resting his feet on the fender, proceeded to pound and break the piece of coal, declaring it was a very raw, cold night.

If there was a thing Mrs. Danby hated, it was to see a piece of coal splintered, and, as she termed it, blazing away like a tallow-candle.

"I wish you'd let the fire alone—you'll make the dust fly all over the room. I can't think what you would have—the room is like a stove."

So it was to her, for she had already fretted herself into a nervous fever.

"I assure you," said Mr. Danby, with great docility, abandoning the poker, "I feel extremely cold—and uncomfortable," added he, looking round the apartment, and for the first time in his life seeming to be aware how sordid and disagreeable it was.

"Uncomfortable!—I am sure I don't wonder at that! Everybody feels themselves uncomfortable when they begin with new ways of life, and abandon all the old and excellent habits in which they have been reared. I don't know where you have been; that is, I know the place—the Oaks—somewhere down in the west; but I don't know what sort of people you have been among. But this I know, it's the first time in your life you ever drew for a hundred pounds. I wonder what you could find to do with so large a sum! I hope it's safe?"

A grim smile stole over the features of Mr. Danby at this speech; he was thinking, with a feeling almost of entertainment, of the far larger sum that he had put into jeopardy without her knowledge. The idea of the fuss she would make about it—the anguish and vexation of spirit it would occasion, could she but be made aware of it—gave him a little rather wicked enjoyment; but, like a good son, he resolved to spare her feelings, and let her know nothing about the matter.

"You look as pleased as if you had done some clever thing," said she, in a vexed tone.

"Why, mother, whether I did a clever thing or not," said he, "it was no such mighty thing."

"Oh, you think so! A hundred pounds no such mighty thing! How grand we grow! I remember, young man, the time when I looked upon it almost as a fortune. Ay, your father and I worked hard, and spared hard, to save the first hundred pounds that was laid out upon your education."

"Good mother," said he, kindly.

"And all to see you waste it now!" she added.

He had been used from a child to hear this sort of reasoning; he considered it an attribute of the sex, and let it pass.

"But I wish Mrs. Susan would let me have my supper."

"I wish, before you thought so much about your supper, you would let me hear a little of what you have been about; and, at least, what you did with the hundred pounds."

"That's a secret," said he.

"A secret!" she cried, lifting up her hands, and in a voice half wail, half scold; "a secret from me! and the first you ever had in your life! Oh, Matthew!"

She looked really hurt and alarmed. Other and better mothers have felt that step—the first secret withheld by their son—inevitable, they know, but painful: it is the severance of the tie of childhood.

Mrs. Danby was not a reasonable, she was a very jealous mother—jealous of power, jealous of influence over her son's mind, jealous of his conduct, of his feelings, of everything.

The pain a reasonable woman might have felt was exasperated to intensity by these unreasonable feelings. She looked exceedingly vexed and hurt, and sat some time in gloomy silence.

Such men as Mr. Danby are entirely in the power of women of this description; their habitual tranquillity is disturbed, their good nature wounded; and, as they have no self-love, they take it as a matter of course that they are to blame when they are told so.

"No great matter of a secret," said he, stirring the fire again inadvertently: "the money was wanted for the Wyndhams."

"The Wyndhams! And who, if you please, are *the* Wyndhams? What claim have they upon *your* money?"

"They were, unfortunately, very much in want of it at the moment," said he.

"Very much in want of it! And pray whose fault was that?—Yours?"

"Not mine, certainly," said he, with a little dry laugh. "The truth is," he added, stirring the fire again, "that Mr. Wyndham is in difficulties. I know, mother, whatever I tell you is sacred."

"You'll poke the fire out. *Do*, pray, put down that poker. Well, Mr. Wyndham is in difficulties; and pray, what has that to do with *you*, except, perhaps, in your professional capacity? I suppose you went down for that; but I hope you will take care to charge your expenses."

Here came another little half-amused smile.

"Yes, yes—I'll take good care of myself."

"But this hundred pounds. I hope you had good security for it, as you were fool enough to lend it? Your father's maxim was, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be,' and you had better make it yours."

There was no reply to this. His conscience rather smote him, when he thought how little he had adhered to the wise maxim of his father; in the principle of which, had it been the case of a third person, he would as readily have concurred as any one. So he again took hold of the poker.

"Do let that poker alone! Who are these Wyndhams? Some large, needy family, with a dozen children, I'll be bound," with the utmost contempt in her tone; for Mrs. Danby always felt the profoundest contempt and disgust for the unfortunate possessors of large families of children. "The less any one has to do with such needy, hungry, grasping people, as a man and wife at the head of a squalling family, the better; and as for accommodation—"

"Oh, there are only two people in this case—Mr. Wyndham and his daughter—for his wife is just dead."

"His daughter!" With a true woman's instinct, the word flashed like a sudden sunbeam through her mind. "Daughter!—pray how old may his daughter be?"

"I'm no great judge of young ladies' ages—about twenty, it may be."

"Young ladies! And what have you to do with young ladies, or their ages, pray?"

"Very little, indeed, I am sorry to say," and the poker was again in his hand; but, as he durst not stir the fire, he contented himself with swinging it between his finger and thumb.

"Sorry to say!—what do you mean by 'sorry to say?' I don't know you to-night. *You*, at your age!—you ought to be ashamed of philandering after young ladies!"

The poker fell on the hearth with a loud noise, as he suddenly pushed back his chair, rose, laid his hand upon the bell, and rang it impatiently. "When *will* Susan bring my supper? If she makes me wait much longer, I shall go to my chambers without it."

"What a noise and din you *do* make! Sit down again, Matthew, and let me hear a little more of what you have been doing."

"Endeavouring to reduce the inextricable confusion of Mr. Wyndham's affairs into something like order—that is what I have been doing."

"And in the mean time lending the money, I suppose?"

"Something very much like it."

"I could not have believed it of you, son."

"Why not?" said he, innocently.

"That you could be so improvident, so absurd!"

"I could not have thought it of myself a month ago," said he, alluding to the subject matter of his secret consciousness.

Susan now came in, carrying the tray and things for supper. He rose up, and, as he often did, took out the table for her, and opened the leaves himself, all in his usual dawdling manner—his limbs seeming to hang by wires, and his clothes to have been made for a person twice the size of himself.

Supper was soon set; and while he sat and enjoyed his beef-steak, which Susan had taken care should be both juicy and good, his mother remained silent, but full of thought, and eyeing him with her sharp, penetrating black eye.

When he had done he pushed the table from him, and, while Susan carried away the things, resumed his place by the fire, very much the better for his supper.

If ever fancies *couleur de rose* could visit the twilight caves of his imagination, they did so now. Susan had hastily popped a good piece of coal upon the fire, unobserved by her mistress, who was absorbed in thought, and it was blazing away in a most unaccustomed manner. The flashing light gave an air of cheerfulness even to that dingy apartment; he felt its influence, rested his feet upon both sides of the grate, threw himself back upon his chair, and was soon lost in reverie.

You will not require to be told where he was in spirit; his mother's sharp and watchful eye followed him, and continued to rest upon him for a very long time. At last she broke silence with—

"And so, I suppose, this Miss Wyndham, his daughter, will have nothing at all?"

"Not a doit," said he, starting, and settling himself with his own feet, and the four legs of his chair, on the floor again.

"And, *therefore*, I suppose, you have thought proper to fall in love with her?"

Ah! Mrs. Danby, your temper got the better of your prudence then! Nothing so dangerous as to give the passions a name.

"I should not have presumed to think of such a thing," he observed.

"Presumed!" she exclaimed, with increasing acrimony—"presumed! Is she such a mighty paragon of perfection, then?"

"She is a very sweet and excellent young lady," he said in a low tone.

"I dare say. Ah, you fools of men think everything sweet and excellent when you fall in love! But I never thought to hear such a pack of nonsense from you."

No reply.

Nothing *finishes* a temper which is about to go like silence. The most provoking words in the world are less *aggravating*, as the women say. Mrs. Danby had now lost all command of hers.

"Some artful, interesting puss, as they all are, I'll be bound; who, because her father's ruined, and she a beggar, a pretty beggar!—she may be pretty or ugly, I neither know nor care—is setting her cap at you. It would be a pretty settlement for her, with your fortune! A nice thing enough, after all her mis-

fortunes, for the young lady! But I have no patience with you for being such a dupe."

A flash as of lightning shot through his bosom. He suddenly glanced up in his mother's face, as suddenly turned his chair almost round, and sat with his back to her, letting her run on as long as she pleased. He heard not one syllable more.

Mrs. Danby had done enough; and thoughts began to possess his brain, which, but for her interference, might, probably, never have entered it. The words, "a nice thing enough for the young lady, after her misfortunes," rang in his ears.

Tired with its own volubility, the old lady's tongue at last stood still. He seized the opportunity, and, rising hastily from his chair, got up and went to her, gave her a kiss—a most rare and almost unheard-of proceeding, which surprised her so that she had not time even to exclaim, and, seizing his hat, which was thrown upon the old settee, made his escape down stairs.

He told Susan hastily that he would send for his portmanteau in the morning, opened the door, and rushed abroad into the night. He was panting to be alone. His heart seemed bursting with the new idea thus suddenly presented to him—"a nice situation for the young lady, after all her misfortunes!"

Yes, it was most true; ruin, inevitable ruin, surrounded her—he knew it well. She was a beggar, an absolutely penniless beggar! She, with all her delicate tastes, her elegant habits, this beautiful angel of his imagination, was poor, defenceless, penniless, houseless as the beggar who passed him in the streets. She must know this soon—it could not long be concealed from her. He saw her standing in her father's halls, with all her household gods shattered around her, a beautiful vision amid a heap of ruins, and himself, not, as his fancy had too often pictured him, a poor, shy, hesitating quill-driver, but the manly, strong, and powerful deliverer, snatching her from the tottering and blackened fragments, and catching her to his bosom.

He walked so fast that his gait seemed almost like that of a madman, and people turned back as he strode along. He was, indeed, as one transformed; the might of that one idea had given vigour to the trembling frame, and strength to the feeble knees. Mr. Danby felt that he was a man.

The night-wind blew upon his breast, and breathed upon his forehead, giving, as it were, a glow of health and vigour, never known before, to his feelings.

Long did he wander, walking rapidly from street to street, in a sort of ecstasy, wrapt from the world and all it contained by that one entrancing idea. No saint, no Theresa, no St. Francis, in the sublime trance of ecstatic devotion, ever experienced feelings more intense than his. I do not know how long it might have been before he found himself at the door of his own chambers, and took his key to let himself in. The old clerk was still there—there the creaking stair, the cobwebbed passage, the sordid apartment.

The external world would seem, indeed, to be but as a pic-

ture, reflected from our own internal thoughts. There were no comparisons made now, no depressing and heart-sinking comparisons. This chamber, any chamber—the slave-ship's hold, the felon's dungeon, the very lowermost pit—had been paradise, so she were by. He peopled the chambers, his chambers, with her image.

His chambers!

She was there. He saw her gliding about, in her soft and charming manner, ministering all the graceful charities of her most exquisite life for him. He saw her! Oh, could his thoughts have found words, how extravagant would they not have been! No exaggeration but would have fallen short of his feelings.

He was absolutely in a state of delirium; and it was in this intoxication of thought that, at last, slumber surprised his most blissful pillow.

He awoke in the morning, after this brief intoxication, calmed and sobered; but not as too many awake, after a state of excitement, depressed in spirit, and wondering where all the bright visions of the evening have fled.

He awoke in the morning, only to enjoy the supreme felicity of finding the ideas which had furnished the ecstatic rapture of the night justified by the sober reason of the day.

I believe men in general, in their idea of women's feelings upon the subject of marriage, think very much too much of what they have to offer, and very much too little of what they themselves are.

The situation in which Emilia, he knew, was standing, and his own very advantageous position in the world, considered with reference to each other, nothing seemed more natural than to expect that she should with satisfaction grasp the hand stretched out to save her, and accept wealth and security, in the place of beggary and dependence. He felt that the proposal he had to make was suitable and consonant—what might have been ridiculous before was now full of propriety. It was as natural that he should make the proposal as that she should accept it.

He never thought of her feelings—he considered hers as little as he reflected upon his own. He had never even applied the word love to himself till his mother brought it out. His feelings had all the genuine simplicity of a first passion.

His instincts, rather than his consideration, had led him to regard her as something far above his sphere, far too bright and fair to be within even his range of thought; but, now that this new view of the subject had been presented to his mind, he at once estimated its congruity, and never thought of any difficulty.

It was true, as his mother had said, he was getting old, and was somewhat grey; but what was that? He had a home, and she wanted one.

She was defenceless—she was an orphan, and far worse than

an orphan—a poor, fatuitous father was linked to her fate. He would take them both in—he would be a guardian to the poor driveller, and husband and parent in one to her. And she would be, as he had last seen her at the Oaks, serene and at peace.

He did not picture her now as the bright, animated girl of the terrace, with the gipsy hat hanging upon her arm: he thought of her as the calm, the grave, the gentle, with her quiet smile, presiding at his table, and making *his* tea, and in his own home!

He rose from his bed to meet the labours of the day, and with a cheerfulness and alacrity in his feelings which he had never experienced before. Life had taken quite a new aspect: its business had a purpose, its strenuous occupation a reward.

He found an accumulation of papers upon his table, and looked around upon these evidences of increasing employment with a new pleasure. Wealth and consideration had obtained a value in his eyes.

He sat himself cheerfully down in his arm-chair, and began to look about him with a brightness and animation quite foreign to his usual expression.

Before, however, he began to arrange his papers, his first care was to place his treasured keepsake, to which was added the little note he had received from her, in its usual place. He then began to look over and examine the deeds before him, and was soon lost in the accustomed occupation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Dislodged from our haunts, we must in tears
Unwind a love knit up in many years.—H. KING.

EMILIA remained at the Oaks, to brood over the past, and to be filled with fresh anxiety for the future. Lisa's fate was the subject-matter of many an anxious hour, as she uneasily expected the promised letter, every fresh post being the harbinger of a fresh disappointment.

The warm affection which the gay, unthinking creature had expressed, the tender tears she had shed, the sympathy in her sorrow which she had shown, had increased the affection of her friend to the highest degree; and yet almost every other sentence that fell from her lips had distressed, nay, almost disgusted her. The open and daring contempt she showed for her mother, the careless levity with which she received the proofs of her father's affection, the vain, not to say corrupted, ideas that had already taken possession of her mind, filled the heart of Emilia with grief.

To see a being so young, volatile, and full of feeling, under the direction of a woman so entirely vain, heartless, and selfish as Lady Maria—whose temper was as violent as her understanding was narrow—was a source of the sincerest pity.

She heard that the family had left Haldimands two days after Lisa's visit to the Oaks, and hoped that Lisa would not, when once settled in town, forget her promise. Still no letter came. At last, wearied with expectation, Emilia wrote herself; her letter was simple, affectionate, and full of the kindest and most judicious advice, mingled with a little tender reproach for her friend's levity and forgetfulness.

The answer was not long in arriving, and was as follows:—

"TO MISS WYNNDHAM.—The Lady Maria Hesketh presents her compliments to Miss Wyndham.

"She has taken the liberty to open a letter addressed by Miss Wyndham to her daughter, as Lady Maria has always deemed it advisable that young people of Miss Hesketh's tender age should not be allowed to enter into correspondences unauthorised by their parents. Certain circumstances which have lately occurred have led Lady Maria to doubt of the good effects of the very great influence exercised by Miss Wyndham over her daughter's mind. She has therefore thought proper to desire that all correspondence in writing might, for the present, cease between the young people; and Miss Hesketh has chosen to meet this prohibition in a manner which has only confirmed Lady Maria in a sense of its propriety. She does not affect to know how far Miss Wyndham may be inclined to dispute her authority and disregard her wishes in these matters; all she can say is, if a correspondence in letters—which she shall take care to prevent as far as lies in her power—be continued to be carried on, it must be by clandestine means—equally unworthy of both young ladies."

The pain that this letter occasioned was, to say the least of it, quite as great as the writer intended.

To be thus separated at one stroke from the little friend whose affection had been such a source of happiness, and the very faults of whose character only rendered her an object of greater interest, was a heavy blow.

To part thus—without one word of explanation passing between them—in ignorance of all Lisa was thinking or feeling upon the occasion—was almost more than she knew how to bear. Would Lisa submit to this fresh proof of tyranny and ill-will? She tried to hope she would—and that she should never hear from her again; and yet it was with a sense of pleasure, for which she blamed herself, but which she could not help indulging, that, opening the letter-bag one morning, a tiny letter, directed in Lisa's hand, met her eyes.

"Just three words, Emilia—for I am quite sure, after mamma's last letter, a copy of which she had the *consideration* to send to me—that however *I* might persist in writing to you, I need not hope that *you* would ever again write to me—you *could* not do it, my friend, my more than mother. Much as you love me, your own pride must forbid your condescending to address a single line to a house where your letters have met with such a reception. Thank you for your answering my last—but your answer never reached me; Lady Maria has burned it; and I have not even resented it as I ought. It has quite broken my heart—I can do nothing, like a fool as I am, but cry, dearest, sweetest Emilia: but remember your *promise* to me. The time will come when we shall meet again. I shall never, never forget you—never cease to love and honour you. We sail for St. Petersburg on the 10th of next month. I am to be presented to-morrow. How little do I care for all these things now! I shall have no pleasure now I can't laugh with you; I don't seem to care for anything in the

world. Love me, Emily. Send a lock of your hair to Rundell and Bridge's; they have orders to make me a bracelet of it, and you will find one of your poor Lisa's hair sent down to you. Put it on, keep it for my sake, and never let it leave your wrist. I shall know when we meet again—as meet again *we shall*—whether you love me, by whether it is there or not. Your disconsolate LISA.

“Don't marry that horrid Mr. Danby.”

And so closed for the present this episode in Emilia's life.

The correspondence ceased; the family of Sir Thomas Hesketh sailed for St. Petersburg; rapidly succeeding events diverted their interests from each other; the mother triumphed, and succeeded in putting an end to this innocent and most valuable youthful friendship.

Let me pause a moment.

Such was the effect of the evil passions and prejudices of that deformity of nature—that most fatal and mysterious form of evil—a *bad mother*!

It is too much the fashion, I think, in books of this nature, to speak of that most sacred relation of mother and child as one so deeply founded on the strongest and most generous sentiments of our nature, as to escape the selfishness and the infirmities that blemish, corrupt, and cloud over our other affections.

But let not mothers rely too much upon such instincts. Let them not rely too far on the continuance of that passionate instinctive attachment which binds them to their *infant* children.

Excellent, incomparable mothers there are, and—thank God for it!—in thousands; but has not the picture a reverse?

Let women ask themselves, especially women of fashion and of the world,—for this sacred relation seems almost to demand the quiet of domestic life to rise to its best perfection,—let such women ask themselves whether, though the frightful picture I have drawn be, doubtless, a case of exception—whether there is not too much reason to believe that, in *degree*, many offend in the same manner?

Coquettish wives—indolent and extravagant mistresses of families—devolving the sacred duties of motherhood upon ill-selected nurses and governesses, their own pride, temper, passion, and vanity, little corrected or controlled—let them ask themselves whether they are not in some degree rearing their young and tender offspring to imitate the vices and follies which they practise themselves.

Oh, long, awful, and terrible account, when the fable of the double farthings on the horse-shoe become a type of the dreadful accumulations of domestic evil!

Emilia was summoned from these regrets for the loss of her friend by the more urgent call of rapidly advancing circumstances in her life's story.

She was, as yet, happily not aware to the full extent of the inextricable confusion of Mr. Wyndham's affairs; but the state of her father's intellects was beginning seriously to alarm her.

She could no longer disguise from herself that the weakness of his comprehension, his disjointed and almost childish talk, his whining and peevish temper, and his confused and imperfect memory, were not merely the temporary effects of the debility consequent upon a long illness. She began to perceive, what had been evident from the first to the more experienced eye of Mr. Finch, that the violence of the fever had left permanent ill effects upon the brain, and that the rest of Mr. Wyndham's life would be one of helpless dependence upon others.

It is true Mr. Danby had, by his well-timed and judicious mode of putting questions, been able to elicit from him certain information with regard to papers and proceedings which was necessary to assist him in the task he had so generously undertaken of arranging these disordered affairs; but this was all. The mind, when not stimulated to unwilling efforts by the able lawyer, sank into a state of almost complete imbecility; his dinner seemed to be the only thing of sufficient interest to occupy the thoughts of the day.

He mostly sat in his own room, and passed the morning in looking out of the window, and wondering when it would be dinner-time. The evening he sat by his fire, poking it, and groaning and grumbling over, or congratulating himself, as the case might be, upon the more or less perfection with which the little niceties which his daughter provided for him had been served up.

Emilia had abundant time to resume her anxious musings upon the future.

What was the true situation of her affairs? Why had she not had the courage to make more inquiry from Mr. Danby when he was with her? She blamed herself for her own weakness; but there was something about Mr. Danby that, after all, she could not help being afraid of. Quiet as his manner had been during the last visit—almost gentle—almost kind—the roughness with which he had spoken upon these subjects during his first had left an impression upon her which she could not shake off.

She felt her influence over him in some degree, though entirely unaware of the true nature of his feelings; she instinctively knew that he liked her, that he admired her; she could talk to him with ease of matters indifferent, for here she was the superior of the two; her elegance, her politeness, her cultivated mind, her habits of conversation, very much perfected by the sort of intellectual intercourse maintained with her clever mother, rendered her in such respects far above his level. He felt this, and was gentle and acquiescent, even somewhat embarrassed; but once get him upon matters of real business, and the tables were turned: he was as clear, brief, plain-spoken, rough, and determined with her as he would have been with any other person. He had made her feel this once, and she shrank from trying him again.

She was afraid of him, and not afraid of him,

Nothing, perhaps, so much prevents the attachment of young persons to those considerably older than themselves as this kind of fear. It seems to place an impassable gulf between them. The awe he excites is frequently not in the least perceived by the elder; but it chills all the genial confidence of youth; nothing but a reverence and respect, amounting almost to worship, can compensate to the young heart for the want of freedom and ease.

Emilia did not feel inclined to honour Mr. Danby with feelings of this high nature. There was nothing in him to excite them.

Even his abilities she took upon credit; his talents were exercised in a region upon which she could not enter even in thought. She had not the slightest perception of the acuteness or the power exercised in employments such as his. She respected him for his reputation among men, and she felt deeply grateful for the readiness with which he had engaged in her affairs; but of the full extent of her obligations she had not the slightest idea. She felt bound to him by simple gratitude, and not animated by any other feeling—and mere gratitude is a cold tie. Her obligations were indeed such as she could at that time form no idea of. Mr. Danby had undertaken, merely for the pleasure of being of use to her, to disentangle a chaos—to him the most odious and disgusting in the world—a labyrinth of all those petty shifts devised by unprincipled, and adopted by weak and wasteful men, for the purpose of what is called, in vulgar language, “raising the wind.”

But more than this: he had, as I have before related, given security for a very considerable sum of money, to prevent the numerous and urgent creditors who held no securities of their own from disturbing Mr. Wyndham or his daughter in their first affliction. He had, however, when he did this, found reason to hope that the estate of the Oaks—which Rile had led him to consider as unencumbered—would be sufficient finally to reimburse, in a great measure, his advances.

It was true the sum which, under the present adverse circumstances, might be realised by its sale was doubtful; but the circumstance gave him very little uneasiness—I might say none; the amusement which he had derived from the idea of the dismay and indignation his mother would have felt, could she have surmised what he had been about, had almost already compensated this man of few smiles for that.

CHAPTER XIX.

Then in Life's goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the coloured waters less,
For in thy darkness and distress
New light and strength they give.—LONGFELLOW

THE hundred pounds that Emilia had accepted from Mr. Danby were beginning, by this time, to diminish in a manner that

alarmed her : frugal as she was, and careful as her servants were in every article of expenditure, every succeeding week made fearful inroads into the precious sum. She began to feel a recurrence of her first wretched anxiety upon the subject of her daily payments.

To apply again to Mr. Danby was particularly abhorrent to her. She thought of Mr. Wilcox, and resolved at last that she would ask him to oblige her with a small loan, if her uncle should not soon arrive.

But when would that uncle return? Little as he was in the habit of bringing peace where he came, her heart yearned for him.

He was her nearest relation—he was her own mother's brother ; he had a right to protect her, and she had a claim upon his protection ; he would rescue her from the hands of strangers ; she should once more be placed in a natural position, and escape, at least, from the fatal and perplexing position in which she stood. At last, after a much longer interval of time than had at first been contemplated, the long-desired handwriting greeted her eye. She drew the letter from the post-bag, her hands trembling with impatience, and read—

"MY DEAR EMY,—I have been wandering all over the world, I think—that is, all over the Scotch and Irish world—and your two letters have been travelling after me. I have got them at last, and hear, with much grief, of the death of my poor sister and the illness of your father. No doubt you must have been in great distress and perplexity when you wrote ; but I hope your father is better by this time. What do you mean by 'the state in which things are here?' Nothing more serious amiss, I trust. I have long had suspicions that your father's style of housekeeping was above that which was warranted by his fortune. He never seemed to be aware that his estate did not entitle him to live in the same way as the rest of us. I am only waiting for a day or two, just to put things a little in order hereabouts, and then you may expect me at the Oaks. In the mean time, send me a line to tell me how you are all going on."

EMILIA TO SIR HERBERT.

"MY DEAR UNCLE,—I was so glad to see your handwriting—I have been counting the days till I thought you would return. Pray, dear sir, come to us as soon as you can. My father's illness has been most severe ; and he has not yet at all recovered himself, so as to be as he used to be. Mr. Danby has been here, and has the charge of my father's affairs at present ; for my father is not yet at all able to undertake them himself. He has been here twice. I do so want you to meet him. He has not said much to me ; and I think it better to wait till you come here, to tell you how things are. Pray, my dear uncle, come to us as soon as you can make it convenient. Your affectionate niece,

"EMILIA WYNNDHAM.

"Could you be so very good as to send me a little money?"

SIR HERBERT TO EMILIA.

"MY DEAR EMILIA,—It seems a rather odd thing, that the first thing you do when your uncle returns is to attack him for money. Your mother never asked me for ten pounds in her life ; and nothing destroys family harmony and affection like this sort of obligations. I, for one, have always set my face against them, and I am glad I did. I might have been mixed up with your father's affairs in a way very disagreeable and inconvenient to me, especially as I consider a sister's husband as having no more real relationship or claim upon me

than any other man in the world, so soon as the tie which unites us—*her* well-being and comfort—is dissolved. I do not mean to say the same of you, Emilia; you are my own niece, and, as such, entitled to my care and consideration; but I don't like to be *asked* for money, and so immediately upon my return, too. You should have waited to see what I might be inclined to do for you; it would have been more modest and proper. However, I am the last man to lecture you—it is no business of mine, thank goodness, to direct your education. I love you, and that's enough. Tell me what you want, and what you want it for, and I will send you a cheque on my bankers for the sum; that is, if you are in such a *desperate* hurry that you cannot wait till I come.

"H. M."

If you had seen the effect this letter produced upon Emilia's mind, you would have acknowledged that she was more than worthy of all her mother's fond esteem and proud anticipations.

Many a young heart, so tender, affectionate, and unpractised as hers, would have broken down under it. Many a proud young spirit, of a more resolute and courageous temperament, might have cast away, in a fit of noble indignation, the last patron and support that was left either for herself or for her father. She did neither.

She did not shed one tear over this cruel letter. She did not give vent to one expression of disgust or indignation; but it aged her—years!

It seemed at one stroke to open her eyes and disenchant life—to dissolve all the flattering sunlights and softening mists with which the young imagination veils the real, and to teach her those harsh truths of man's position and relations which experience, sooner or later, teaches to us all. That it is written—man, the human being, must depend upon himself—upon his own good courage and his own self-balanced mind—that mind resting for support upon those deep convictions of the soul which, if I do not enlarge upon them here, it is because I have said much of them at other times and in other places, and my heart revolts from the idea of rendering hackneyed that holy and awful theme.

I have told you the careful mother had laid deep those foundations upon which she rested the structure of her daughter's moral character: she had accustomed her to look beyond this false and fleeting world for support under sorrow—for justice under misconception—for mercy under error and infirmity—for faultless beauty and for genuine good—and, animated by such hopes, to endure with patience the disgust, the deformities, the disappointments, and the despairs of this life.

Emilia read her uncle's letter; and, as she read it, the last expectation on which she had rested for earthly support and assistance died away. She knew her uncle well; she had never thought him an amiable man; but, with the happy confidence of youth, she had believed that, under circumstances so distressing as hers, she should find him all that their near relationship entitled her to expect. She had not looked for affectionate sympathy, for a tenderness of feeling that would have been inexpressibly consoling to her; but she had counted

with perfect confidence upon protection, and what is commonly called kindness ; and the idea of any difficulty upon the subject of a few trifling sums of money had not presented itself.

She had only been anxious that nothing regarding her mother's funeral should be done so as to hurt his pride. She had never once calculated the extent of his shabbiness.

She, however, collected her spirits, refusing herself even the *indulgence* of feeling *pained*—do you understand me? She felt called upon not only to support herself, but to shelter and support her helpless father. She saw this was not to be done by sorrowful lamentation or by petulant complaints ; to pity herself would be the most dangerous of weaknesses ; to feel exasperated against her uncle the most incapacitating of indulgences—for her father's sake, if not for her own, he must be, if possible, interested in their fate, not alienated by any expression of resentment. She wrote as follows :—

“ MY DEAR UNCLE,—I am very sorry you thought my application so improper. I dare say it appears so to you, who are ignorant of the circumstances in which I stood. Pray believe, till I can fully explain things, that I am as sensible as you can wish me to be of the truth of what you say about borrowing money, even from relations ; but I think you would still more object to my lying under obligation to strangers. I have been obliged to borrow one hundred pounds from Mr. Danby ; that sum is quite exhausted, and I thought you would approve of my applying to you, now I am absolutely in distress, for a little more.

“ EMILIA.”

“ MY DEAR EMILIA,—It is perfectly incomprehensible to me *how* you can be what you call in *distress*. What is your father about? Is he too ill to write a cheque? and, if he be, surely his banker would accommodate you. However, applying to his man of business, who is, I conclude, this Mr. Danby, is pretty much the same thing. You need not frighten yourself about that sort of accommodation ; it is quite a matter of course. I send you a bank post bill for twenty-five pounds, and shall be with you the day after to-morrow ; for I cannot understand what you are all about ; it is quite incomprehensible to me. Write to this Mr. Danby, who, I conclude, is the well-known lawyer in Chancery Lane, and tell him to come down and give me the meeting—as he appears to have the conducting of your father's affairs—though his line of business is one, as I have always understood, quite out of the course of such things. He is neither an agent nor a solicitor, as I believe. Have the white room made ready for me ; you know I abhor all your other rooms, with the sun upon them in the evening : and take care the bed is well aired. You must see to these things yourself. I think I got a cold the last time I was at the Oaks, owing to the sheets being not as they should be ; and that is one reason why I have been so long without paying you a visit.”

EMILIA TO MR. DANBY.

“ My uncle has promised to be here upon the 13th instant ; can Mr. Danby have the great kindness to give him the meeting? He seems anxious about the state of my poor father's affairs, and perfectly in the dark upon the subject. In so painful a matter, and where I feel so incapable, it would be the greatest relief to me could Mr. Danby have the charity to afford me once again the benefit of his invaluable assistance.”

It was all very natural to use that last word. Her uncle's letters had already taught her to appreciate in quite a new manner Mr. Danby's kindness. She began to feel how great

ally, in these matters, abiding by the maxim, "not to seek glory, but to avoid disgrace," conducted all the machinery part of life with a sober and philosophical composure; so that, had it not been for Mr. Wyndham's fidgety extravagance, his table certainly would never have ranked so high in the estimation of the epicures as with such assistance it did. I beseech you not, therefore, to imagine that anything was neglected or ill-regulated. Mrs. Wyndham performed this part of life as well as she did the rest; but there was *measure* in all she did. And she was the furthest woman in the world from paltry vanity upon these subjects.

Sir Herbert was, however, so extremely difficult to please, and so hurt and offended if he did not think every pains in the world were taken to please him, that it really became no easy matter; but he was always angry when he detected any symptom of foolish extravagance on the part of his brother-in-law—and not without reason; for Sir Herbert was no fool. He was an excessively proud man—proud of his ancient family, his large hereditary estates and ample fortune. He had, as a young man, been in the Guards, and had trod the usual round of fashionable excess and dissipation, which had certainly not tended to soften his heart; but of late years he had retired to his country-seat in a remote county, and had enjoyed much fewer opportunities of measuring himself with others than most men enjoy. He had learned of late to consider himself as a sort of petty sovereign—quite the richest and most important man of the whole family connexion—and he exacted a species of observance in all things, which it required sometimes no little skill and much good humour to pay; for he laid down the law, and expected it to be observed, in matters both of opinion and conduct, in a way which rendered it not very easy to get along with him.

The white room was prepared with the most scrupulous attention, and visited twenty times in the course of the morning; the fire nursed up as an object of intense solicitude, that it might be just in that unattainable state of perfection—a fire ever ready to burst into a cheerful blaze when the guest should enter his chamber. The saloon was once more open, and resumed its now melancholy splendour; the covers of the chairs were removed; the cold satin, in all its dreary magnificence, exposed; chandeliers uncovered, girandoles unpapered, and a fire blazing in the chimney; the dinner delicate and expensive, though small; the best wine brought up from the cellar; the servants in full attendance; all as it had used to be in better days.

She had dressed her poor father for the first time in his deep mourning: he had to that day continued to wear his dressing-gown, and she had brought him down into the dining-room to receive her uncle.

The poor man had submitted, with many tears, to put on his black coat, and with much persuasion had at last consented to come down stairs.

"My uncle, sir: you will come down to receive my uncle?"

"Ay, ay! your poor mother's brother. Yes, yes! I suppose I must come down to him. But, to tell you the truth, Emily, I never much liked him. I didn't use to say so, to vex your poor mother; but I'd rather he never came near us; and I don't see why you put my coat on; I like my dressing-gown—it's better: I don't see why I should put on a coat for *him*."

"Oh, sir! you would not choose that he should see you out of mourning. Your dressing-gown, sir, is of such bright colours—he would be hurt, you know, sir, perhaps: you would be sorry to do that."

"But as long as I have *that* on, I think things are, perhaps, as they used to be—but that mourning settles the matter. How can you have the heart, Emilia, to settle the matter by making me put on mourning!—As long as I have that dressing-gown on, I think it mayn't be so.—It's cruel, and it's almost impious of you, Emily"—and he began to cry—"to *settle* the matter—"

Such was the state of his mind.

She could only hope that her uncle would have kindness enough to be pitying and patient; that he would understand the case, and not suffer himself to be irritated by his waywardness and his tediousness. She would leave them as little together as possible—she would manage as well as she could.

For herself, her whole heart yearned with tender compassion to this helpless, ruined, destitute parent—shipwrecked both in his intellect and in his fortunes. The affliction with which the mere fact of helplessness and dependence fills the heart of a woman is the divinest attribute of her nature. Is there a more lovely sight on earth than the devotion of a daughter to an aged, perhaps peevish, parent, sinking into a second childhood; or of a mother to that sickly, deformed, and, perhaps, imbecile child, who is an offence and a burden to every one besides? It is beautiful! It is the Divinity, who created this last best gem of earth, shining through this his fairest creation.

The irritation of Mr. Wyndham's temper was now so evidently the effect of his helplessness and imbecility, that it was for her only a fresh cause for indulgence and sympathy; while the almost infantile affection with which he kissed, blessed, and thanked her, in his happier hours, had become the sweetest of rewards and encouragements.

In the absence of all other sources of affection, that for her father became stronger and stronger every day. She kissed him again; tried to soothe rather than to convince him; and got him, hanging feebly on her arm, safely down stairs, and into his usual place by the fire—which she kept stirring and managing till she heard her uncle's carriage driving up to the door.

about it—I shall think no more about it—you meant it for the best; but, for the love of Heaven! don't cry."

Emilia dried her eyes.

"You must forgive me, sir," said she, with much gentleness. "I have had so much unhappiness of late, that my tears come more readily to my eyes than, perhaps, they ought to do."

"Well, well; but take my advice, Emilia—*never cry*. There is nothing a man hates so much as tears. Nothing irritates me—and I don't take myself to be a *very* ill-tempered man—like tears. I *hate* them."

A pause.

Mr. Wyndham, exhausted by the effort of coming down stairs, had sunk back in his chair, and appeared to be dozing.

Poor Emilia was gathering up all the poor, scattered remains of her fortitude, spirit, and courage, like the shattered remnants of a discomfited army.

At last her uncle said—

"Is Danby here?—That, I think, is the man's name?"

"No, sir, he is not yet arrived."

"Not yet arrived!—Did you write him word what day I proposed to be here?"

"I did, sir.—His answer lies upon the chimney-piece."

Sir Herbert unfolded and read it.

"Mr. Danby will wait upon Miss Wyndham undoubtedly, and will be at the Oaks as nearly at the time she proposes as the arrangement of business in town will possibly admit of."

"Wait upon Miss Wyndham!—Did you mention *me*?"

"To be sure, sir, I did."

"He might have had the politeness to mention me then.—Does he think I was made to wait here, dancing attendance upon him?—He might have specified his hour, at least."

"Perhaps his engagements would not render that possible."

"Upon my word, Miss Wyndham, you seem to have formed a very strange idea of the value and importance of our relative engagements. It may be *just* possible that Sir Herbert Montague's engagements may be of equal importance with those of Mr. Danby. But what am I thinking of? What is one to expect from these vulgar, conceited men of business?"

"Mr. Danby does, indeed, seem not to possess much knowledge of the world. He is a man remarkably plain and simple in his dress and appearance; but I feel sure it is this ignorance, and no vulgar impertinence, that has made him fail in any respect due to you, my dear uncle."

"Of all which, my dear niece, you are, undoubtedly, a competent judge. I wish you had not learned your poor mother's way of laying down the law, and settling matters just according to your own impression of them. You might have followed her example in better things, Miss Emilia."

No reply was made to this.

Sir Herbert played with his watch-chain, his eye glancing upon Mr. Wyndham. At last he said, in a low voice, to her—

"He's in a terrible state, I can see."

She shook her head.

"Quite childish. His very attitude, as he lies in the chair, would be enough. His face is so altered, that I should hardly have known him. What is to be done with *him*? Indeed, what is to be done with either of you?" he added, pettishly.

She could only cast up her eyes in silence. The mute appeal touched him not. When a man is not touched, or is determined he will not be touched, and yet knows that he ought to be so, he is always angry.

"Casting up your eyes to Heaven! I am afraid the appeal will not help you much, Miss Wyndnam. As far as I can observe of the proceedings of Heaven, it loves to help those who can help themselves. I usually find no supernatural interferences to extricate people from the just consequences of their own most culpable behaviour."

"That is but true," said she, humbly and mournfully.

"His extravagance must have been something that exceeded all the usual extremes of human folly. What can he have done with his money? I see half a dozen or more preposterous pieces of ill taste and expense scattered about this room; and it may be so in the others: but such a little affair, after all, as this house is, so little as is required to keep it up in a gentlemanlike manner, it is a matter of astonishment to me where his money has vanished to."

Again she shook her head.

"Do you know nothing?" he asked, in an irritable tone.

"Can you tell me nothing about it at all?"

"I know very little, indeed. I would rather not say anything till Mr. Danby arrives. My impressions may be false. Things may be better than I expect. I hope and trust they are."

"A very comfortable security," was the reply; while Sir Herbert recollected, with great satisfaction, that he held a much more solid one for the twenty thousand pounds he had advanced to Mr. Wyndham, some years ago, upon a mortgage, at five per cent. for the purchase of an adjoining estate.

This reflection somewhat restored his good humour, and he rose, and walking to the window, began to contemplate the prospect without. It was dreary enough. Snow had fallen during the night, and the country lay one dreary blank before him; a few green or black patches, at various places, where the sun had happened to shine upon the fields, just rendering the picture the most ugly and uncomfortable winter scene that it is possible to describe.

Emilia, shivering between cold and depression, sat by the fire, close to her dozing father, whose thin white hand, hanging helplessly over the arm of his chair, she could not forbear stooping down and kissing, as she gently pressed it in her own. The sick man made a motion in his chair, opened his eyes, gazed upon her one moment with a look of affectionate dependence, and then closed the lids, and relapsed into his slumber.

"Come here, Emilia," said her uncle.

She joined him at the window, where he had been some time standing in rumination.

"Have you thought what must be done with him?" making a gesture towards the fire.

"I have really thought of nothing. Mr. Danby advised me to do nothing, to alter nothing, but to go on just as usual, till you should arrive to direct and advise me."

This was not so displeasing.

"That was advice good enough. This Mr. Danby seems to have *some* notion of things. Well, well, it is time enough to settle all *that*; but I wish either this Mr. Danby of yours or dinner would make its appearance. I see your father still holds to his merinoes,"—looking out to some sheep which were eating hay upon the lawn—"a most expensive and ridiculous crotchet, only fit for such men as Coke of Norfolk, who can afford to lose money upon it. I sold all mine two years ago, and advised your father to do the same; but he always, poor creature, thought himself wiser than all the rest of the world put together."

But now, to Emilia's inexpressible relief, the clock struck the half-hour after four, and her uncle, a man of an elaborate toilet, consigned himself to the care of his valet.

CHAPTER XXII.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;

Behind the clouds is the sun still shining.—LONGFELLOW.

MR. DANBY arrived about six o'clock, and was ushered into the dining-room before Emilia had quitted it; for her uncle did not like to sip his wine alone. Her father she had not brought in to dinner; his manner of eating and conducting himself at meals she knew would be insupportable to a person of her uncle's nice ideas. She had, therefore, taken care that he should dine before he left his dressing-room.

They were sitting by the fire with a small table comfortably between them, Sir Herbert sipping some of poor Mr. Wyndham's choicest burgundy, and cracking and peeling his filberts. He looked very comfortable and quite at his ease, with his elegant limbs stretched out towards the fire, and dropping a word now and then to his handsome niece, whose attendance was not at all unpleasant.

He rather liked to have women about him, and since his wife's death had found his home desolate and uncomfortable.

Emilia had taken the precaution to bring that excellent panacea against minor female ills, a little work, into the dining-room; and she sat employed at her netting, lifting up her head when her uncle spoke; answering as pleasantly as she knew how; stirring and arranging the fire so as to keep it in the nearest possible state to absolute perfection; and performing all these little agreeable offices in that quiet and agreeable manner which adds such a charm to a home scene like this.

Sir Herbert really felt quite in a state of enjoyment. The ill-humour with which he had entered the house, the natural result with such as he of bad news and a journey on a winter's day, had yielded to the agreeable influences of the hour. He was beginning to be quite pleased with his niece; it was two years since he had seen her; she was very much formed and improved in external manner since then. The somewhat too frank and animated tone and countenance of the clever and joyous girl, which did not exactly suit his ideas of good taste, had been softened and subdued to a lower and more harmonious tone of colouring; yet there was a spirit, a character, in all she said and did, that, in spite of her gentleness, forced him to respect her. The more he saw of her, the more he liked her.

He was already, it seems, aware that Mr. Wyndham's circumstances were considerably embarrassed, and that he, for the present, might be obliged to offer some assistance, though he was far from contemplating the extent of the case; but the idea of his niece being somewhat dependent upon him was not altogether disagreeable. He was beginning to think, as he sat there handsomely dressed, and the picture of self-satisfaction and self-esteem, with his fine face and fine figure well displayed by the light of the blazing fire and candles, that, really, to have so fine a young creature often with him, to sit at the head of his board when required, look after his servants, read to him, soothe his nerves when fagged, and his temper when irritated, would be no such unpleasant thing; though, to be sure, she *had* no claim upon him.

This last circumstance gave a charming halo of generosity to the idea. It really became one to be pleasantly entertained, to be caressed, as the French say; and he was sitting there caressing it, his arm supported upon the arm of his fauteuil, his legs crossed, his chin resting upon his hand, looking at her while she netted, when the door-bell rang.

"Mr. Danby!" said Emilia, starting up.

Her uncle uncrossed his legs, leaned back in his chair, and prepared to receive the new guest with dignity.

Mr. Danby was never more completely Mr. Danby than when the door opened, and the servant ushered him into the room, if by Mr. Danby is expressed a man to the last degree awkward, unpractised, irresolute, hurried, uncomfortable, his heart and head alike in confusion—filled for the first time in his life with one idea, and that idea not relating to business. He had been so completely absorbed, during the latter part of his journey, with his ruminations upon the step he was almost determined to take—so lost in fond reveries, delightful hopes, contrasted by visions of the darkest disappointment—so torn between resolution and uncertainty, fear and impatience—so at war with himself—in such a tumult of unaccustomed thought and feeling, that he had almost forgotten what he was coming about, or whom he was to meet, till the chaise suddenly stopped at the door.

It was not Sir Herbert—whatever Sir Herbert pleased to suppose—it was not the meeting a person of his high standing that gave that extraordinary character of flutter, hesitation, and absence of all self-possession to Mr. Danby's manner as he entered the room.

He was accustomed to men of all ranks and descriptions, and cared not an inch of red tape for all the dignities in the world: he had seen enough of such things in the course of his long life, and had too often measured his own intellectual powers against the pretensions of the rest of his race, to feel the least degree of awe on approaching any man upon earth.

If it had been only to meet Mr. Herbert upon business—had Sir Herbert been the first magnate of the land, Mr. Danby would have felt as calm and composed as in his own chambers—would have given his opinion as freely, and with the usual unpolished roughness which characterised him, and regarded the impression he produced upon others as little as he heeded any impression they were calculated to produce upon him.

But not Macbeth in the cave of Hecate, before the appalling and prophetic spirits, felt himself more completely daunted, unnerved, unmanned, than did this man of strange sensibility in the awful presence of the woman he loved.

She advanced to meet him, holding out her hand with a sweetness and cordiality she had never shown before. It seemed fated that every hour of her life should add to her value for Mr. Danby's friendship.

The charming expression of her countenance—her speaking face, full of benignity and regard, dazzled him like some shining apparition of almost unearthly glory: he felt almost blinded as, taking her hand with what he intended for a bow, he pressed it, bent his head down upon it, and kissed it.

Sir Herbert is all this time leaning magnificently back in his chair, the picture of dignified importance.

"My uncle, Sir Herbert Montague"—presenting him.

"Mr. Danby? I am happy to have the honour of making your acquaintance, sir," with a bend of the head intended to mark the immeasurable distance which separated them, but which Mr. Danby did not even perceive.

He answered with a slight gesture of acknowledgment, and sat down as if in the company of one perfectly his equal.

Emilia was preparing to leave the room.

"Ring the bell, and order a fresh bottle of wine before you leave us, Emilia, and send coffee to us here."

She obeyed, made her curtsy, and disappeared.

Mr. Danby did not seem quite to recover himself for some minutes.

Sir Herbert gave him time.—Considerate Sir Herbert!—but he thought himself the mirror of politeness and fine manners.

At last the two gentlemen began to open the subject they were met to discuss, and to talk about business. The magnate was lost in the man; and Sir Herbert became as seriously in

earnest, and thought as little of himself (I don't mean of his own interests) as Mr. Danby could do.

Emilia returned to the saloon.

The shutters were closed; the heavy, rich curtains drawn; the fire was blazing upon the hearth; the wax candles were lighted upon the table; the pale face of her father in his deep mourning dress, his white hair scattering round his temples, was resting upon the crimson pillow of his arm-chair; he was asleep, and breathing with all the regularity of an infant. The repose of childhood, the soft, confiding look of a slumbering child, had settled upon his brow. She went up to him, gazed upon him with a look of inexpressible tenderness and kindness, then, with the greatest gentleness, just moved his cushion, so as to support his head in a position somewhat more secure and easy than that he had first assumed, and laid a delicate cambric handkerchief over his face, to shelter him from the draught of the window and fire.

She gazed again—again stooped down and kissed his hand; her heart devoting itself in silence to that life of affectionate care and exertion which the defence of this melancholy and disregarded ruin required.

She had stood some time looking at him, lost in thought, before she turned away.

Was it to reward her filial piety?—She turned round—a letter was upon the table.

She took it up—it was to her address; and—

In *his* hand.

Ah! how the rosy colour flushed bright into her cheek! What a beam of inexpressible happiness lighted her eye! How did that still too unschooled heart beat in a tumult of rapture! She could scarcely stand—she did not attempt to stand. She sat down before she broke the seal. It was a black seal. The letter ran thus:—

“MY DEAREST EMILIA—Just preparing for action—a London paper, the *Star*, of the — November, is put into my hand; I cast my eye over it, and see what has happened. My cousin, my beloved cousin, how shall I express my sympathy? How shall I find words to tell you how I feel this for myself as well as for you? What dreams of happiness had been mine in which she ever made a part! We both of us loved her so much, that we could neither of us form any scheme of happiness in which she had not a share.

“My poor cousin!—for cousins we are still—I see your tears, and fancy myself by your side, endeavouring in vain to console you. You think all happiness is over for ever. Yet consider, my dearest E. this is the natural course of things; and think what it would have been for her had the laws of nature been reversed! Oh, that I were with you now! to bid you cheer up—to wipe away your tears, and whisper, ah! my loved Emilia! do you look forward, as I do, to the ineffable moment of our re-union? Dare I hope it? I have scrawled this while my charger is waiting for me at the door. Be my guardian angel, Emilia!—pray for me, that the day of battle may spare me—to be—in the greatest haste—

“C. L.”

The last sentences were scrawled in such evident haste as to be nearly illegible.

But there was quite enough: the letter fell with her hand into her lap, and she sank back in her chair in a rapture of thankfulness. She was already far more than repaid for all the perplexities she had gone through.

His eyes—the tone of his voice—his attitudes—his gestures—had before said much: but what had they ever said to this!

Her eyes were raised to Heaven; her innocent joy and thankfulness were offered where they were due.

Again she read the letter—again, with eyes overflowing with delight. She bathed the precious words with her tears—folded the paper—put it into her bosom—walked up and down the room to compose herself—in vain. She knelt down to kiss her father's pale and pendent hand—rose, again took out the letter, read it as she walked, folded it once more, and again went over the scene of joy.

What was her uncle's petulance now?—what the disorder of her father's affairs to her?—what even his helpless and defenceless condition?—There was *one* who loved her, and for her dear sake would love him—would take them both to his bosom and shelter them, and console them for all that had passed.

Poor Emilia!

It was thus she read this hasty letter, penned by the writer, as he said, upon the eve of one of those desperate engagements which distinguished that terrible yet most interesting contest.

While the fire blazed, her father slumbered, and the deep, heavy snow was falling in wreaths upon the landscape outside the house.

The brightness of the chamber, the tender quiet of the scene, the exquisite, untold rapture of the letter!—It was a moment in life once to be experienced and *never* to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The grave Sir Gilbert holds it for a rule,

That every man in want is knave or fool.—POPE.

THE gentlemen in the mean time were busy in the dining-room. Deep in the consideration of Mr. Wyndham's affairs, Mr. Danby explained to Sir Herbert the state in which things stood, and the utter and irremediable ruin of his brother-in-law. He explained the intricacy and difficulty of coming to a settlement, occasioned by the irregular proceedings of Rile, and proposed that the following morning that gentleman should be summoned to attend and give a more full explanation than Mr. Danby could as yet obtain, of several very important matters which he had still contrived to keep in considerable obscurity. There was a sale and purchase of an estate and some mortgages, Mr. Danby said, of which he could not quite comprehend the details; it being evident that Rile was intentionally perplexing matters, in order to stave off explanation as long as he could.

"In the mean time," Mr. Danby added, "I have endeavoured to obtain a list of the principal liabilities; the amount is, I protest, frightful to look upon; but, at least, it will put you, Sir Herbert, into full possession of the particulars of the case so far. What assets can be realised to meet these demands it is impossible to say. My office concludes here. I assumed it in a somewhat irregular manner, perhaps, in consideration of my old business connexion with Mr. Wyndham, and the unexampled distress in which I found his daughter. . . . I have taken upon myself to act in this manner during your absence—not professionally, I hope you understand, but merely as you yourself, or any friend of the family, might have acted in a case of extremity which admitted not of delay. I have also—the papers having been submitted to my inspection—endeavoured to reduce them to a little order; so as to enable you, with less expense of time and trouble, to gain some insight into the state in which matters at present stand—it will be, no doubt, your intention, under the present distressing situation of Mr. Wyndham's intellects, to assume a sort of temporary guardianship, and place these affairs in the hands of your own solicitor. . . . Any service that, *as a friend*, I can still render, I hope you will not scruple to require; but, except as far as regards some little, trifling matters of my own, I consider I have done with these things."

"Indeed, you very much mistake, sir," Sir Herbert replied, rather majestically, "if you think I am going to encumber or harass myself with any responsibility in this business. I have seen enough of the perplexity and even danger which many men incur, by meddling and making, and mixing themselves up in other persons' affairs, not to have entered into a serious resolution, to which I most religiously intend to adhere, never to have anything to do with other men's matters, be it in the shape of executorship, trusteeship, guardianship, or any other "slip" whatsoever. . . . I am not lawyer enough to know what is the remedy the law provides in cases such as these; but I doubt not its provisions are fully adequate to settle all such things for people—and, indeed, in a far better manner than any one else can do it for them."

Mr. Danby lifted up his eyes from the paper he was examining, fixed them upon Sir Herbert's face—considered it for a short time in silence—then a grim smile stole over his thin lips; he slightly shrugged up his shoulders, and returned to his reading.

Sir Herbert, too much engaged with his own ideas to perceive the expression upon the lawyer's face, went on:—

"Had my poor sister been alive, of course, for her sake, I might have looked a little more into things, and should probably have been persuaded so to do. She was a woman of business herself.—There would have been no danger of my entangling myself in any disagreeable responsibility; but to take it upon me to interfere *now*, when such a proceeding might involve the most disagreeable consequences to myself—

to play the part of guardian to a girl under these very doubtful and unpleasant circumstances—much less to interfere in the direction of any one in her father's present condition—meddling or making, where I confess I cannot in the least see my way—indeed, my dear sir, it is not to be thought of for an instant. But, in fact, with regard to Emilia—there is, I remember, her mother's settlement—”

“You may drive a coach and four horses through it.”

“You don't say so! Who on earth, then, is to undertake the maintenance either of her or her father?”

Mr. Danby was silent, and continued to read.

“I am sure,” exclaimed Sir Herbert, growing very hot and pushing back his chair, “I can pretend to have nothing to do with it—I wash my hands of it entirely. If my poor sister were alive, to be sure, something *might* perhaps be arranged for Emilia; but as for that idiotic old fool! what on earth is to be done with him?”

Mr. Danby laid down his paper, pushed back his chair in his turn, and throwing himself comfortably back in it, fixed his eyes again upon Sir Herbert, seeming to contemplate him with a species of feeling very near akin to pleasure, if we might judge by the almost imperceptible, but highly sarcastic, smile that again was just visible upon his mouth.

To tell the truth, he had the greatest possible contempt for human nature in general; and these antics of selfishness afforded him the enjoyment of the most perfect of comedies.

Sir Herbert grew hotter and hotter, and fidgeted his chair up and down in the agitation of endeavouring to persuade himself that to abandon his brother-in-law entirely at this most unhappy crisis, was the most prudent and reasonable, and, if persuasion could go so far, benevolent, part possible.

“After such infamous negligence of his affairs—such an exhibition of extravagance and folly!—it's very easy to come and throw himself upon the compassion of the first weak fool who is careless enough of the claims of himself and others to undertake such a burden. Just like him! no delicacy—no consideration for the rest of the world! He was always the most selfish being I ever came across.—As if there were no one on earth to be considered but himself! But I hope I know better what the claims upon me are, and have firmness enough to attend to the rights of those who have done nothing to forfeit my esteem—I hope I know what is due to *them* as well as to myself.”

These claims of others, to which Sir Herbert so conscientiously adhered, were those of a very distant relation whom he had never seen, and certainly did not in the least care for, and on whom the estate, in case of his dying without issue, was entailed.

“There is not a doubt of it, Sir Herbert—it is needless to recur again to the subject. All you have urged is unanswerable. I, for one, should be the last man in the world to sus-

pect you of being guilty of the folly of undertaking such a charge."

"You are quite right, Mr. Danby. I am glad a gentleman of your experience in business takes so just a view of the case. Indeed, it is the only one that can possibly be taken by any one with the slightest perception of what is right. Of all connexions in the world, I have always held that which unites one to a brother-in-law as the very weakest—as merely imaginary, indeed, and as ceasing altogether the moment the tie that bound the individuals is dissolved. I consider myself, in fact, as having nothing on earth now to do with Mr. Wyndham or with his affairs—except as far as my own may be concerned; but *that* will soon be settled. *My* man of business knows what he is about—he has taken proper care of me."

"Of you!" said Mr. Danby, starting at an expression that savoured of real business, like the war-horse at the sound of the trumpet. "Of you, Sir Herbert! I was not aware that you were involved in any degree in these matters—your name even has not once been mentioned."

"Possibly not; but there are certain little deeds belonging to me, which will be brought forward at the proper time," said Sir Herbert, throwing himself back again in his chair, and caressing, with increased satisfaction, the delightful idea of his own security from possible loss.

Mr. Danby cast his lawyer's eye upon him, sharp, quick, and penetrating as a needle.

What could he mean?

He took up the list of debts, which he had prepared for Sir Herbert's inspection—that gentleman's name was certainly not there.

He laid it down, and looked in his face, as if waiting for explanation.

"Oh, a mere trifle!" said Sir Herbert, carelessly. "I lent him some money in my foolish days, soon after I came of age. The savings had been large during my minority; we were all just married—he and my sister, and I. He wanted to buy the manor here, and some property that lay up to his own. My lawyer did not think particularly well of the funds. He was right enough there, it seems; so he advised me to oblige him, and take a mortgage, at five per cent, upon his estate. I think it must be ample security for the money at the present price of land."

"Hum!" said Mr. Danby, drawing his chair a little back. "A mortgage on the estate!"—then to himself—"What a rascal that Rile must be!"

"Well," said Sir Herbert, eyeing him—for he did look a little discomfited. He did not care for the money; but it was not in a man, under the circumstances, not to look a little taken aback at this intelligence.

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Mr. Danby, approaching the table again, "I found affairs in so desperate a condition

when first I came down here—an execution in the house, and others threatened—even that rascal, Rile, threatening a *ca-fa* and I don't know what—that I rather unadvisedly, perhaps, gave my personal security for the sums in question, on condition that Miss Wyndham should not be disturbed—looking to this property, which I understood from Rile was unincumbered, as my indemnity.”

It is, perhaps, scarcely worth while to say, that Rile had accepted Mr. Danby's security with the idea of raising money upon it for himself before departing for America; in which asylum it had been his intention to seek refuge so soon as he should have contrived to realize what he thought a sufficient capital. He had had most villanous dealings and understandings with many of the creditors, not much better than himself, in order to press upon the family, in their present distress, and obtain an immediate settlement of their accounts, to the detriment of others. He had already raised, as I have said, a considerable sum of money upon Mr. Danby's security, leaving him in ignorance of Sir Herbert's mortgage; and now, while Mr. Danby and Sir Herbert were sitting comfortably over the fire together, discoursing of what should be said and done in the morning, Mr. Rile had taken the mail for London, leaving the accounts of the majority of the creditors unsettled; and, entering the first packet, he was soon on his way to New York.

Sir Herbert—all this time with an air as indifferent and serene as that with which men are apt to regard the misfortunes of their neighbours—sat sipping his wine, and swinging his elegant foot before the fire, quite comfortable himself. Nothing could affect *his* security.

Mr. Danby was not quite so much at ease. He was vexed to have been duped and overreached by a rascal, so greatly his inferior: not the most romantic love in the world could quite have reconciled him to that idea.

There was not much inclination on the part of either gentleman for further conversation this evening; by mutual consent they rose to seek Emilia and tea.

When they came into the hall, they met her; she, assisted by Biggs, was tenderly leading her father along to bed, supporting him on her arm, talking to him and soothing him—while he went grumbling and lamenting himself up stairs, aided by his old butler on the other side.

Mr. Danby was not much given to the melting mood, we know; but there was something, after his late scene with Sir Herbert, in the sight of this good and pious daughter, bending so kindly and compassionately over her helpless parent, that it made him feel as he never had felt before.

He again to ~~the~~ go up to Mr. Wyndham, as he ought to have done, for one, should ~~be~~ his compliments and bid him good night; struck with a sense of defenceless helplessness, thus supported by a good young creature, he turned abruptly

away, and walking to the glass window of the hall-door, looked out into the night.

Emilia could not help feeling a little hurt at this apparent neglect of her father; but, had she known better, she might have seen that Mr. Danby had thus abruptly walked away only that he might take out his pocket-handkerchief unobserved.

CHAPTER XXIV.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs———SHAKESPEARE. []

EMILIA did not appear again that evening. She sent word into the drawing-room that her father was much fatigued by the exertion he had made, and so uncomfortable that it was not possible for her to leave him; begging her uncle would be so good as to excuse her attendance, and suffer the housekeeper to send in his tea. This was a disappointment to both the gentlemen.

Sir Herbert, who liked to have his tea made in the room, was vexed and displeased; and this little circumstance, trifling as it may appear, indisposed him still more, if possible, to his unhappy brother-in-law. The idea of taking Emilia home with him had once or twice crossed his mind, even now that he knew she had not a farthing in the world, and that the entire burden of her maintenance would devolve upon him;—but what was to be done with her father? She must be separated from him, of course; but who was to maintain him?

The idea of burdening himself with the payment of a few hundred pounds a-year—of actually having to advance such a sum out of his own pocket, and for such a purpose, made him go hot and cold by turns. All the consolation he could find was in the reflection that, probably, things might not be quite so bad as Mr. Danby had represented them, and that when Rile came up in the morning, sufficient out of the wreck might be secured to afford an annuity to support the poor madman some way or other, for the remainder of his miserable life.

This last idea comforted him; he was accustomed to take all his own expectations for facts, and the fulfilment of a wish as almost the necessary consequence of its being formed. So, having set his anxious mind at rest with this sedative, he began to feel somewhat dull, and, stretching his hand to the bell, rang for the butler; and, ordering an additional pair of candles, and a small table, proposed to Mr. Danby to play a game at piquet.

Mr. Danby, who was sitting buried in his arm-chair, his legs stretched out, his head thrown back, and in a profound reverie, started, as if he had been shot, at the unexpected proposal, and answered with a hurried—"I beg your pardon, Sir Herbert were you speaking?

"This is stupid work enough, Mr. Danby, I was saying, what do you think of a game of piquet? I have ordered the candles and table."

"A game at what?" said Mr. Danby.

"Ecarté, piquet—anything to get over this confoundedly stupid evening. I must say, I think Miss Emilia might find time to give us a little of her company, after making me come so far upon her affairs!"

"I cannot play at any game of cards," said Mr. Danby; and resuming his former attitude, he sunk back into his chair, and was again lost in thought.

Sir Herbert sat eyeing him in silence for some time. At last, as if he had suddenly taken his resolution, the eye of Mr. Danby brightened—his anxious brow cleared—he rose suddenly from his chair and began to pace the room.

While Sir Herbert, astonished at this novel manner of treating a person of his immense importance, sat looking at him, and, from time to time, almost dislocating his jaw with terrific yawns.

Emilia did not appear any more; and, at a very early hour, the gentlemen took their candles and went to bed—the one very much out of humour, and only strengthened in his internal determination not to be drawn into making rash promises in behalf of Mr. Wyndham—the other, his resolution taken, his mind settled and at peace; his imagination filled with pictures of ineffable bliss, and his heart with kind and benevolent intentions. Too absent to mind what he was about, he took his candle, and, without the ceremony of bidding good night, walked away to his room—leaving to Sir Herbert, as the sole consolation for his offended dignity, the reflection that the other was the greatest bear in existence.

In the mean time, Emilia, having, after hours of patient tenderness, at length soothed and composed the irritated nerves and spirits of her father, and tranquillized, in some degree, his disordered ideas, had laid herself, in her turn, down to rest, having read and re-read, for the fifth time, the beloved letter. Her thoughts full of sweet visions of a future, that was so far to overpay anything which the present might call upon her to endure, she had sunk into that sweet slumber which visits the pillow of one undisturbed by the anxious calculations of selfishness, whose day has been spent in generous self-devotion. Unchilled by unkindness, and proof against the unsympathizing carelessness of others, she found strength and consolation in the generous warmth of her own heart.

The morning, as you will have anticipated, brought the astounding news that Rile had decamped; and the post-bag was filled with letters from impatient creditors, whose accounts that gentleman had promised but neglected to arrange.

The cheques that Mr. Danby had drawn, for the purpose of

satisfying some of them, had not even been delivered, but had disappeared with Mr. Rile. The most of them pleaded the securities they held, and demanded payment in no measured terms—the flight of the attorney had brought affairs to their final crisis.

The house was soon filled with applicants, who all wanted to speak with Mr. Danby.

His patience and equanimity were admirable. Provoking as was the manner in which he had suffered himself to be duped—irritating as were the circumstances of such a robbery—large as was the portion of his fortune thus literally thrown away—Mr. Danby did not even mutter one expression of vexation.

Having ascertained that Rile was really gone, and that he had carried away the cheques,—which it was plain had never been applied to the purposes for which they were intended,—he had no doubt that they had been presented and paid as soon as banking hours would permit that very morning. It was too late, therefore, to afford any but the slightest chance of stopping payment; but he wrote immediately to his banker, and despatched the letter by express, not to neglect any chance of diminishing the loss. He then, with unruffled composure—the list in his hand of those debts for which he had offered security—gave audience to the different creditors, discharged their accounts one by one, without a remark (for he had previously examined them before preparing the list for Sir Herbert), and taking the different receipts, filed them as quietly as if it had been a business in which he had no personal interest whatsoever.

The greatest part of the morning had been thus employed; and it was three o'clock before Mr. Danby, locking the receipts in that study drawer of which he still kept the key, returned to the breakfast-room, where he found Sir Herbert.

That gentleman's temper had not at all been improved by his morning's occupation. Rendered excessively nervous by this new proof of the description of hands into which the management of Mr. Wyndham's affairs had fallen, while Mr. Danby was occupied in paying away his money to discharge the debts of another, Sir Herbert was walking about, making a rude sort of estimate of the value of his own security against possible loss.

His employment had not been a very satisfactory one. In the first place, the land held in hand was in a bad condition, and proved, upon examination, of very much worse quality than he had imagined. This annoyed him considerably; but there was the timber—the bare, leafless, wintry trees, gave him an excellent opportunity for making a rough calculation as to the value of that. The result was not consoling. Those woods, which in summer looked, at a distance, lofty and handsome enough, exposed, amid their leafless branches, a very different spectacle to the anxiously inquiring eye.

All the valuable oaks had, in fact, long been gone there

was nothing remaining but young growing timber, of little value at present to any one.

But the rage of Sir Herbert may be imagined; the excess to which he carried what he called his just indignation may be conceived, when he found that a considerable part of the outlying land, in various portions, had been at different times sold to the surrounding small proprietors—people, as it must be supposed, who had not been very particular about their titles, having accepted such as Mr. Rile had thought proper to make out; he was the confidential man of business to the whole neighbourhood, and the opportunity of purchasing land in these minute portions was a temptation almost irresistible.

Certain enough, the land was gone and the estate had been clipped and diminished piecemeal, in this manner, till it was very much shorn of its just proportions.

Sir Herbert was almost beside himself with rage, and the expressions in which he allowed himself to indulge before the trembling Emilia would shock you too much for repetition. He was speaking at the top of his voice, declaring his resolution not to assist his brother-in-law with a penny, though he should lie for the rest of his life in a gaol; and the unhappy girl, overpowered by this fresh conviction of her father's ill conduct, yet horror-struck at the idea of his deserted and desolate situation, was weeping bitterly—after vainly endeavouring to palliate what her heart told her admitted of no palliation—when the handle of the door turned, the door opened, and Mr. Danby entered the room.

Emilia rose hastily and instantly quitted it; while Sir Herbert continued his hasty walk up and down the floor. But he turned like a fury the moment he saw Mr. Danby, with, "Well, sir, have you become acquainted with this new proof of the miserable swindling of my rascally brother-in-law and his pettifogging thief of an attorney? Would you believe it? They have contrived not only to let the estate run to ruin, till it has lost half its value—not only to cut down every stick of marketable timber—but actually to get rid of a large portion of the land! The land, sir!—mortgaged to me! Sold it! Sold it, the scoundrels! What stuff did they think I was made of, to be the dupe and the victim of their miserable intrigues? I, sir! Do I look like a man to be fooled out of my fortune in this manner? But, by Heaven, I'll have my revenge! I'll catch that Rile, if he hide himself at the antipodes! He shall swing for it! And as for the other miserable creature, let him rot in a gaol or die in a madhouse—for he has not a friend in the world who will stand by him.

"As for the girl, she may beg her bread in the streets, for what I care! She has dared to uphold her miserable father, even to my face! I've done with her; and who on earth will have pity on her? She has not a single friend upon earth but myself."

"Pardon me, Sir Herbert," said Mr. Danby, as soon as a

pause in this torrent of passion could allow him to speak ; "but this may not be altogether so—"

"How !" he cried, stepping in his hasty walk, turning round, and confronting him fiercely ; "are you, too, about to contradict me ? I say she has not a farthing in the world ! She has this moment confessed to me that the thousand pounds her poor foolish aunt left her is gone. She is a beggar, and must perish miserably in the streets, unless I think fit to offer her a home."

"There is another home at her disposal, permit me to say, Sir Herbert," he observed.

Then, coming forward with a dignity of appearance and gesture quite new—for his feelings were excited to the highest pitch of generous compassion—

"May I request a moment's patient hearing. I have a brief proposal to lay before you—and, with your sanction, before Miss Wyndham. My heart has long been hers ; my hand and fortune are at her disposal. If she will do me the honour to accept of such protection as I can offer, she shall find a home for herself and for her father—"

Sir Herbert stood transfixed with astonishment.

"Can you be serious ?" at length he said.

"Serious !" repeated Mr. Danby.

"Do I understand you rightly ? Herself ! her father ! Penniless as she is ! and after all your losses ?"

"There is one compensation, and one alone, that would repay me for far greater losses. I ask nothing—I want nothing—only let me possess *herself*, and the portion of both Indies would be of no account."

"And her father ? Do you really mean to say you will burden yourself with her father ?"

"I have already, I believe, stated," replied Mr. Danby, coldly, "that I would relieve Sir Herbert of that—as well as of all the other insupportable responsibilities and burdens consequent upon these unfortunate affairs. Have I his sanction to apply to Miss Wyndham ?"

"My dear sir," said Sir Herbert—having at length collected his ideas sufficiently to comprehend the length and breadth of this most opportune proposal, which thus relieved him of all those burdens, which, in spite of his passionate declarations to the contrary, he could not help feeling that the world would expect him to undertake—"nothing can be more noble, more disinterested and generous than your proposals. My niece, I must, however, beg in honour to assure you, can expect nothing from me ; she is, as I have told you, utterly penniless. You must take her for the love, without the money—ha ! ha !" he cried, trying to look a little facetious.

Mr. Danby looked disgusted.

"I have made my proposals, Sir Herbert ; may I be allowed an audience with Miss Wyndham ?"

Sir Herbert's answer was to ring the bell.

"Tell Miss Wyndham," to the servant who entered, "that she is wanted in the breakfast-room."

Mr. Danby's knees were now knocking together.

This was not what he wanted; he would rather have sought her himself—have stumbled upon her, as it were, unawares; for her to be called down in this business-like manner by her imperious uncle, and his proposals communicated something in the manner of a royal marriage, was insupportable. Yet he felt so terrified at the idea of the first interview—so wretched at the thought of having to explain his feelings to her—that he had not sufficient presence of mind left to express his wishes to Sir Herbert.

He turned to the window, and stood looking out; while Sir Herbert continued to pace the room, in a mood much more complacent and comfortable than he had enjoyed since he had entered this hapless mansion.

The door opened, and she entered. Her eyes were red, her face was flushed with weeping; her dress and appearance spoke the entire desolation and disorder of her feelings.

"You wanted me, sir?" she said, with her hand upon the door.

"That gentleman wishes to speak with you, Miss Wyndham," pointing towards Mr. Danby, who moved not, and Sir Herbert quitted the room.

He was gone! and to her distress, astonishment, and despair, she saw Mr. Danby sink to her feet!

The words that rushed from his lips were incoherent—inarticulate. She could never afterwards remember them; but they were words of fire.

While she, transformed to marble, stood the pale picture of dismay—

He, in a few rapid sentences, declared a passion, such as it is given to few to excite—to few to experience—and ended by offering her his hand and fortune, and the protection of a son to her defenceless and unhappy father.

At that mention, she raised her hands, in a sort of wild agony, to her face; and, with a faint cry, burst into a passion of tears.

His own emotions were so overpowering, that he had not time to comprehend the nature of hers; he continued to press her unresisting hand to his lips, and to pour forth all the unintelligible suplications of feelings such as were his. But she soon recovered herself, and, withdrawing her hand, said—

"Oh! rise, Mr. Danby! You in such an attitude to me! Oh, rise! I beseech you! I cannot bear it."

He had risen immediately, and stood, the tide of impassioned feeling arrested, trembling and disconcerted before her.

"Your generosity," she began, with many sobs and tears; "your generous disinterestedness—"

"Don't speak in that way, if you would not kill me, Emilia," he said, passionately.

"But how can I find words? How can I tell what I feel, Mr.

Danby? My gratitude—my deep sense—my feeling of obligation—your last generous offer—after all!” she was sobbing bitterly. “But I would have given worlds this had never occurred; for how can I bear to give you pain?”

And she burst into fresh tears.

“You mean, then, to reject me?” he said in a deep, hollow voice of gloomy despair. “I ought to have expected it.”

She could only weep.

He went up to her impetuously.

“Speak again—speak plainly—tell me you hate, despise, and detest me—as I know you do.”

“Oh, how can you say so? I honour and esteem, and while I live shall ever feel grateful to you. But this—oh, Heavens!” and, with a look of irrepressible repugnance, she almost shrank from him.

“Gratitude!” he said; “yes, I understand what *that* means;” and, turning hastily away, he went again to the window.

He was quite unmanned—for a moment he felt like a mere child—this sudden destruction of all his hopes, and of all his visions, utterly overset him. He stood weeping at the window, yielding, unconsciously, to his weakness.

She had sunk upon the sofa, and wept too.

He did not feel in the least offended. He was far too humble a lover for that; but he was bitterly disappointed. It was certainly not from self-conceit that he had allowed himself to feel quite secure of success: he had, as I have said, only considered the circumstances—her helpless and defenceless condition, and the power he possessed to rescue and reinstate her.

Under the influence of such ideas, he had allowed himself to construct a scheme of happiness, which he had looked upon as realized—he had dwelt, in thought, upon her own and her father’s deplorable condition—dependent upon a man so heartless and selfish as Sir Herbert, and upon the security he had to offer: and he had seemed entirely to forget the price at which that security was to be purchased.

Now, as a sort of spectro, his mother’s rude words rose to his recollection.

“So old as you are, with your grey hairs.”

And he felt humbled and mortified beyond words, astonished at his own presumption, ashamed to have exposed his weakness to her contempt—every feeling of self-abasement which can degrade a man in his own opinion, taking possession of his mind.

He turned round and saw her bitterly weeping; and grief, at having thus distressed her, was added to his other painful feelings.

He hesitated—trembled—paused; then he came up to her, and said—

“I have made you unhappy, Miss Wyndham. God knows I little intended it! Forgive me! Believe me, I am fully aware by this time of the preposterous impropriety of my proposals. But spare me your disdain—my own self-contempt is sufficient.

I have been hurried forward by feelings new to a man of my character and habits, and I have acted with the folly and weakness of a child. "I loved you, Emilia"—here his voice faltered—"loved you with a force of which I could not have believed the human heart capable!—loved you as never one human creature before loved another! You are to me like an angel—like a dream of beauty, goodness, and happiness! I am talking nonsense. It was, indeed, a vain and idle dream! But I see I distress you, and I have done. Will you make my excuses to Sir Herbert? It is very unmanly; but, after what has passed, I cannot meet him again. The aspect of this place is insupportable to me."

He went on hurriedly—

"Miss Wyndham! Emilia!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand again, and pressing it passionately to his lips, "sometimes, when you are radiant with love and happiness, surrounded with all that can make life valuable—sometimes think of the lost and melancholy lawyer—buried, yet still alive, in his lonely chamber."

Again he kissed her hand. She made no effort to detain him—he was gone; and she continued to weep.

CHAPTER XXV.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.—LONGFELLOW.

BUT she was not suffered to remain in this manner long.

Impatient for the termination of the conference, Sir Herbert had remained in the dining-room, with the door open, reading his newspaper, and waiting till the separation of the two parties most deeply interested should allow him to offer those congratulations he felt so heartily inclined to pay.

He saw Mr. Danby hastily quit the room, and make for the hall-door.

And, after waiting five minutes to give Emilia time to recover herself, he crossed the hall, and entered the parlour.

He was not very much surprised to find her crying, but was not prepared to see her in such an attitude of uncontrollable grief and despair.

We know Sir Herbert very much disliked tears; so, in spite of his good humour, he could not help saying, as he went up to her—

"Well, well—but I believe all young ladies think it necessary to shed a few '*natural* tears' upon these occasions. But you rather overdo the matter, Emy. Come, come, wipe your eyes, and let me congratulate you upon this most unexpected and fortunate *dénouement*."

Still she did not speak; she was so occupied with her own feelings, that she did not, I believe, even hear him enter the room.

"Well, you women must have your tears upon all occasions; it is quite an essential of every ceremony in which you are concerned, I know; but, seriously, Emilia, I must congratulate you. In the terrible position in which you were standing, utterly beggared and without resource, to have an establishment so thoroughly respectable as this offered to you at the very moment is a piece of good fortune as great as unexpected. It is true," continued he, in a considerate tone, sitting down by her, "under more fortunate circumstances, this is not exactly the match we might have expected for you, Emy. Family connexion, good blood, all that sort of ideas, we must put out of the question; still the law is a thoroughly respectable profession; and I doubt not Danby has saved a good deal of money, and will be enabled and willing to make you a very handsome settlement, though you have not a doit to offer in return."

She took her handkerchief from before her eyes, opened them wide with astonishment, and fixed them upon his face.

"Uncle," she said, "you cannot think that I have accepted him?"

"What do you mean?" cried he, returning her look of astonishment with one more astonished still. "Why, you haven't been such an excessive fool as to refuse him?"

She was silent; the rage that was in his accent terrified her.

"You haven't been such an excessive fool!" he repeated, crimsoning with passion. "Speak, Emilia—speak directly!—tell me you haven't been such a fool as to discourage him!"

"I could do nothing else," at length she got out.

"Why, you don't mean to say—beggar and dependant as you are—that you have had the infernal stupidity to discourage addresses such as these? And who on earth is to provide for you?—and what are you to do? Have you asked yourself *that*?" he said, speaking between his teeth; "or do you think I'm such a piece of boiled velvet as to provide for you, or your poor idiot father? Have you thought of that, Miss Wyndham? What are you to do with your father?"

"Alas! alas! I had little thought of that!"

"I should think so—I should think that you had thought very little of his situation, when you threw away such an offer as this. Your pride, forsooth! His family, or some such nonsense, not good enough, I'll be bound. I can have my pride as well as you; but I'd have you to know, I'd tear my coat of arms in two before I'd make such a fool of myself as this. It's natural for me, and I *did* feel some difficulty at the moment; but when I had got over it—when I had made the sacrifice of my family dignity to your welfare, and been content to accept, as a connexion, such a man as this, was it for you—in your position—to pretend to be nice upon the subject?"

"Believe me," said she, earnestly, "I was actuated by no such contemptible feeling!"

"Then, for Heaven's sake! by what were you *actuated*, as you please to call it."

"By a regard to his and my own true happiness. It was impossible I could be happy myself, and impossible I could make him happy, in such a connexion," she said, with some spirit.

"Happiness!—stuff! What childish nonsense is this! Come, come, Emilia, I see how it is. You have been a little alarmed and disconcerted; but you are a girl of sense—you will think better of this and recal this grey-headed Strephon of yours. Pooh, pooh! you ought to know better. Marriages are straightforward matters, and the less romance that is put into them the better. It is astonishing how soon there is an end of love and all that sort of thing; as old Absolute says, 'As well begin with a little aversion.' Come, come," said Sir Herbert, who had the highest opinion of his own powers of persuasion; "this Corydon cannot be far off; I'll go and fetch him, and bring him to your feet again."

"Impossible, sir! My dear uncle, pray don't go; I have nothing in the world to say to him. Mr. Danby has his answer—for Heaven's sake, do not let us meet any more!"

This sort of altercation lasted a little time. Sir Herbert was beginning to get warm. At last he said with an expression of bitterness it is impossible to describe,—

"Have done, Emilia, with this nonsense; for, by Heaven, I swear you shall marry him, whether you will or no! Sit down," he added, for she had risen in her agitation, "and hear what I have to say. As you are such an idiot that you will not understand me, unless I speak out—speak out I will, and have done with it.

"Sit down!" he said. She obeyed him, trembling.

"Do you know the situation in which you stand?"

"I believe I do. My poor father is utterly ruined?"

"Your poor father is not only utterly ruined, in the common sense of the word, but he has not one single sixpence in the world; and his infamous attempt to overreach me has resulted in driving from him the only friend in the universe who could or who would help him. All I can do—now mind, Emilia—you know me well—I am a man of resolution—all I can do, and all I *will* do, is to shut him up in some asylum for poor madmen like himself; and, then, if you please, you may dispose of yourself as you like. I will do thus much for him—for his helpless condition demands it—but not one farthing more; and as for you—"

But he had touched upon the right string.

Her father, destitute and deserted, exposed to all the cruelty in his helpless condition which was the lot of those in his days, placed in such asylums and under such discipline—to leave him to his fate, and then to go on contented with that ease and comfort which the mere sense of liberty and independence would bring to her—the feeling was insupportable!

"Besides," said he tauntingly, "do you know what you are in debt to this man for?—thousands of pounds. Yes; he has put in jeopardy and has absolutely lost thousands for your and your

father's sake. Does that demand some little consideration or not?"

"How? I don't understand it."

He then explained, while she looked with looks aghast, what Mr. Danby had done for her; and having once more placed before her the only alternative, as he called it, that offered, in terms which she too well understood, and with threats—for she knew him well—that she felt persuaded would not evaporate in words, he rose, and, leaving the room, abandoned her to her own contemplations.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.—LONGFELLOW.

EMILIA's first feeling, upon being left alone, was that of a sort of bewildered astonishment at the changes in her situation which the last hour had produced.

She continued to walk up and down the room in which her uncle had left her, his last words ringing in her ears. She saw her father, miserable and deserted, and abandoned to heartless strangers—for she began to understand her uncle's character better than she had ever before done—and to estimate what her father, after all the causes of offence he had unhappily given, might expect from a character so hard and so unpitying. He had, alas! furnished sufficient reason to satisfy the conscience of such a man that severe dealing would be but justice.

Of herself she thought little. As far as she was concerned, her heart yearned for liberty—to get her bread, to provide for her own wants, had never to her seemed that terrible destiny which it appears to those nursed in helpless luxury. There was something strenuous and energetic in her character that rejoiced in the idea of action.

Then Mr. Danby—the enormous obligations under which she lay to him—the immense sum he had sacrificed for her sake—the depth of his attachment, which had spoken in words of a truth and strength which still vibrated in her ears, but, alas! were powerless to touch her heart—why should she shrink from him with such unutterable aversion?

Then rose up the dreary, sickening prospect of life, such as life without the heart—when, alas! the heart has been already given away—presents to a girl of true feeling. A dreary waste—a landscape without one sunbeam to cheer it—a round of unpaid duty, to which the labours of the wretched slave in the mine are light—for he has hope, but hope would perish here!

Would she be right? Could it be right? Was this sacrifice one that any embarrassment, any exigency, could render excusable? The woman's heart said, no! It told her that the claims of the heart were the strongest, the most indefeasible of

claims; that no duty could be stringent enough to justify the disregard of *them*. But then, again, her father!—her helpless situation—not a farthing she could call her own—the utter desolation—the horrible dependence upon such a man as her uncle!

Then she took out the letter of Colonel Lenox, which lay next her heart. She read it again, and with a more anxious feeling—and again repeated the inquiry, did he love her? Did he intend—would he come to her rescue? Were his feelings serious and devoted? or were they, alas! but a vague romance, of which she might hear no more? No; her heart told her that he loved her—and yet, in a case so serious, in which the support of her unhappy father was concerned, on what could she rely?

Could she plead to her uncle such an attachment as this—so little countenanced, after all, by anything that had been actually said or written—so entirely born and nourished of those sweet looks, and tones, and vague expressions, which to a third person were less than nothing? Every sentiment of female pride within her forbade her making the slightest allusion to it.

Thus she walked up and down the little room, lost in miserable thought, unable to arrange her ideas into any consistent form, her only comfort being, that Mr. Danby had left the house and her hope that she should never see him more. She felt all other things might arrange themselves—that circumstances might modify *them*—but that a marriage against the inclination—a marriage such as this—could not be modified, could not be alleviated—its grievous slavery it must be impossible to lighten.

She ended by resolving to maintain her resolution.

The first thing now to be done was to understand exactly the position in which she stood.

Mr. Danby was gone—she had nothing further to hope from him; he, whom she had become accustomed to look upon as a protector, as a shield between her and evil, was withdrawn, and she stood exposed and undefended to meet that tempest which seemed gathering fast around her. She must have a calmer explanation with her uncle than had been possible in their late agitated interview. She must learn what his real intentions were, estimate her own resources, and prepare herself accordingly. This resolution, if resolution it can be called, formed, she felt more composed; and arranging her disordered hair, bathing her handkerchief, and pressing it to her eyes to take away the redness which might have betrayed her emotion to her father, she went up into his room to see how he was going on.

The night had been restless—the agitation of yesterday seemed to have brought on some return of the fever. She had left him, when she was suddenly called down stairs, very uncomfortable—she found him talking more incoherently than ever.

She did not stay long in the room. She turned sadly away, more convinced than before that his case was hopeless—that he

would, for a long time, perhaps for ever, require the most constant and indulgent treatment—that the least roughness, or contradiction, or mismanagement on the part of others, might exasperate him to frenzy.

It was with a heavy heart that she went slowly up stairs to her room, to prepare herself for dinner with her uncle. Her perplexities, her distress and anxiety, seemed to increase every hour.

Her only resource lay in an appeal to her uncle's humanity and kindness. He was not utterly without a heart; she was the child of the sister he had imagined he loved: surely he would not be without pity.

Sir Herbert, in the mean time, had been making his own reflections, and carrying his own resolutions into execution; that is, as far as circumstances would admit. The result was communicated to her in due time.

They met at dinner.

She had been struggling for the last hour to quiet her nerves, compose her thoughts, and call up fresh courage, by the idea that she stood at the worst point of her fortunes; that the appeal she trembled at the idea of making was only in idea a source of terror; for that, however unkind and out of temper her uncle might be, he could not threaten anything worse than he had already done—she might amend, but, however ill she pleaded, she could not aggravate her father's fate or her own.

She looked, therefore, composed, though very serious; and there was an air of severe resolution, if I may use the expression, upon her countenance, which would have given it, interesting as it usually was, a more than ordinary interest to the eye of any discerning observer. Her uncle, however, only reflected that the storm of tears and hysterics, the woman's passion, was over; and that she was now in a fit state to receive what he had to announce, without that intolerable thing to men of his stamp—a scene.

So, with a slight gesture of recognition, but without uttering a word, he sat down opposite to her at table, and began to eat the delicacies she had provided, though in a sort of absent manner, and not engaged, as usual, in culling and picking out the most delicate morsels from the dishes presented to him. He seemed somewhat impatient that his dinner should be over, and pushed away his plate, and looked at the servant who removed it—but all the time he did not utter one single word.

There was something very alarming in this silence.

Was it the effect of determined resentment? Was she to consider her offence as unpardonable? Her hopes from the effect of her premeditated appeal grew more and more faint as, her lips getting whiter every moment, she glanced from time to time at her uncle's countenance.

It was impossible for expression to be more gloomy, sullen, and determined.

There is something in features so extremely handsome and

regular as his which gives additional force, and a darker horror, if I may so say, to the expression of the resentful passions.

The meal, which both seemed to think insupportably tedious, at an end, the small table was as usual placed before the fire, the dessert and wine laid on it, the chairs rolled round, fresh coals put on, the hearth brushed, the different things one by one removed, the ceremony of the servants' departure—which she thought interminable—concluded, and the door shut.

Oh, how had her gathered courage gradually evaporated! When the door at last closed, she felt that she could hardly find voice to speak.

Her uncle poured out his wine, pared his nonpareil, lifted his glass, looked at it, sipped it, set it down, all in the same despairing silence, all with the same gloomy and despairing brow.

At last she summed up all her resolution, she broke the awful silence, the words seeming to sound like thunder in her ears, and echo round the lofty and empty apartment, as she said, in a tone so low and inarticulate that it was scarcely audible—

“My uncle—”

He did not even lift up his head from the fruit he was peeling, his arms leaning upon the table, and his eye intent, as it would seem, upon what he was about.

This was terrible—she felt if she hesitated one second more she was lost.

It was—with a desperate effort to speak louder—

“My dear uncle, I—”

“Did you speak?” said he, lifting up his head, and with the same immoveable expression.

“My dear uncle, if you would allow me, I should very much wish for a few moments' conversation with you.”

“What does this fine preface mean? What hinders you from speaking to me whenever you like? I only wish you may have something reasonable to say.”

She hesitated, her breath seemed to forsake her, she really did not feel it possible to proceed.

“Well?” he said, with an impatient shrug of his shoulders, as much as to say, “is that all?” and he resumed his occupation.

She made another desperate effort with herself.

“I feel—it seems to me—that I ought distinctly to know in what situation I stand.”

“I am sure, Miss Wyndham, you ought to know best; no one else on earth can say,” he said, without lifting up his head this time, but continuing to peel another apple with the greatest care and attention, as if that was by far the most important business at present upon the *tapis*.

She felt that things were taking quite a different turn from what she had hoped and intended—that to ask him for further explanation would be but to lead him to repeat the declaration he had made in the morning. She had pictured herself as weeping and beseeching at his feet—she saw that there was room for nothing of that sort.

She sat silent and discouraged.

He went on with his occupation, seeming to expect that she would say something more. It would serve as a sort of introduction to his intended declaration.

But as nothing came, he leaned back in his chair, in an attitude and with a countenance that spoke the most determined resolution, and said—

“As it appears I am not to be made further acquainted with your intentions, perhaps you will be pleased to hear me repeat mine.

“I have considered the whole matter temperately and calmly, and have formed my resolution, under that consideration of your own happiness and welfare which, as your last remaining relation, I think it my duty to take. I have come to the conclusion, upon full and calm reflection, and not all the prayers and tears”—for he saw a wild affright in her countenance—“not all the shrieks and exclamations, not all the female tragedy in the world shall move me from it. I know it is for your own good; I know it is what must constitute the rational happiness of any rational woman; I know it is my duty to be determined, and I *am* determined. You will marry Mr. Danby.”

He kept his eyes steadily fixed upon her face while he said this; he seemed to have made up his mind to meet and to resist every species of opposition that she could possibly use, whether of prayers, tears, or declarations—but she made none. The colour forsook her face—she looked deadly pale—for her heart seemed to stand still. She, like himself, began to feel that if he only resolutely determined it should be so, so it must be.

“I am prepared,” he went on, “to be accused by you of the most unparalleled cruelty in thus forcing your inclinations—I think, if I recollect right, that is the young lady’s term in these cases—and thus using the power I happen to possess in obliging you to accept that which the whole world will consider, in your situation, as a most fortunate proposal; and I should despise myself if, in a moment of weakness, I held out any alternative which might lead you to hesitate as to the acceptance of it. Upon further consideration, therefore, I retract every syllable of the promise which, in the hurry of the moment, I made in the morning. I will do *absolutely* nothing, either for you or for your father. This house, in a few days, will be put up to auction; you will be turned out—and—I have written to Mr. Danby.”

And having said all this with a countenance as determined and immovable as he had throughout the last hour maintained, he took up his dessert-knife again, bent down his head, and continued his operations.

She could not speak—she was frozen—she was petrified—she was fascinated—she was encircled in the coil of the serpent—she felt as under some dreadful incubus, and as if all escape were impossible. She saw the dark clouds of destiny gradually rolling round her, closing the bright prospect of her future life,

and enwrapping her in a night as of the grave.[†] She was in a sort of magnetic dream.

While her uncle, peeling his apple, and finally eating it with an air of indifference, drove her almost mad with impatience and indignation.

This last feeling warmed the marble, and gave her words.

"I could not have believed—I cannot yet believe, sir, that you could have so little regard for the feelings of an unhappy young creature, dependent, and in your power," she said, in broken sentences, interrupted not by sobs, but by a sort of convulsive twitching in her throat; "I had hoped—I intended to ask you—my poor father!—I trusted—"

"That I should be as weak, romantic, and ridiculous as the rest of you, I suppose," he added, without lifting up his head; "that I should indulge you in a species of nonsensical repugnance, which I most heartily despise, and burden myself in a manner perfectly disgusting to me, merely to gratify your ridiculous niceties. Here," he cried, looking sternly at her again, "is a proposal made to *you*—a beggar—by a sensible, respectable man, with a fortune sufficient, if not to restore you to your rank, yet enough to make any reasonable person comfortable; and because, forsooth, he does not happen to be a handsome, perfumed puppy, as young and as silly as yourself, you think proper to refuse him, and you consider me a barbarous monster of cruelty, because I will not allow of such preposterous folly. I should despise myself if I did. No, no, Miss Emilia; you have reckoned, I can tell you, without your host, if you reckon upon my abetting you in such unpardonable nonsense."

She felt at the moment, and who can wonder at it? that to belong to Mr. Danby would be a relief.

Seeing she made no reply, he appeared to consider this last speech of his as conclusive; and tossing off a tumbler-full of claret, wiping his fingers on his napkin, and performing all these trifling operations with the same air of determined indifference which he had till then preserved, he rose from his chair and walked away to the drawing-room. There he stirred the fire, flung himself comfortably into the largest arm-chair, took up the newspaper, and began to read, happy, in spite of his apparent insensibility, that the thing was done, the matter decided, and the business over.

† He left the room, but she did not therefore change her position. She sat fixed in her chair—she moved not, she scarcely breathed; she felt, with that sort of certainty with which we sometimes anticipate our fate, that the thing was done—opposition useless—lamentations and prayers worse than useless—that it was written—that the decree had gone forth—that she was to be the wife of Mr. Danby.

She saw and felt this—she did not think it; she was past reflection, comparison, or consideration; from that moment she

saw herself married to Mr. Danby, and at that moment the sun of her existence went out.

Such is the effect which the ill conduct of one human being may produce upon the fate of another; such was the consequence of a father's folly and an uncle's egotism and cold-heartedness; such the wide-spreading destruction consequent on wrong, which too often envelopes the innocent with the guilty. Were it not so—did the evil effects of vice terminate with their author—how slight would be the tragedy of this our tragic life!

After sitting at least an hour in this almost insensible state, she rose up, and, taking one of the candles which stood upon the table, went up to her father's room.

You should have seen her.

Through all her troubles and sorrows, Emilia Wyndham had till then been herself; the glow of a hopeful temper was ever warming her heart; there was a buoyancy, a cheerful spring, which rose up and brightened her countenance, after the first paroxysm of sorrow had been past. She might look very unhappy—she *did* often look very unhappy—but her heart was sound and her spirit unbroken. Her resolution, as that of him who touched his mother earth, rose refreshed and reanimated from all the strokes of adverse fortune. She was formed, as I have said, for energy and action: to struggle and to wrestle with life and difficulty would have been to her but the healthy exercise of her fine abilities.

For Lenox she had often fancied herself enduring, and with a feeling nearly akin to rapture, all the hardships and the dangers of an actual soldier's life; for her father's sake, she could contemplate with pleasure the idea of days and nights of unremitting toil; but then she would be free!

The criminal condemned for life to labour in his solitary prison-house is less a slave than she would be.

His mind at least is unfettered; but she—the very innermost thoughts of her heart were henceforward to be no longer her own.

Yet terrible as was this dreary waste of feeling—repugnant and adverse to every sentiment of her nature—she submitted without further effort to her fate.

She had been too well schooled to indulge in fruitless struggles against what she saw it was vain to resist.

That form which goes slowly up to her father's chamber is but the shadow of Emilia.

All the elasticity of her frame is gone—all the spirit of her countenance extinguished. Alas! the lamp of hope has expired! and who can dwell in darkness for ever?

She had a sort of instinctive feeling that the sight of her poor father would do her good.

She came in, the room was quiet; he had fallen asleep after the late paroxysm, and lay, his poor servant watching beside

him, lost in forgetfulness, and calm as an infant. This peace, this second childishness, this helpless and defenceless slumber, shed a sort of balm upon her spirits. She bent down and kissed him; and, as she thought that he at least would be safe, happy, and undisturbed, the good daughter wept. Those tears were the sweetest she had shed for many a day.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Now if thou would'st when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.—DRAYTON.

IN the mean time Mr. Danby had returned to town in an agony of disappointment that nothing in his previous life could have led any one to anticipate.

His feelings found no expression in words, far less in tears, far less in sighs.

The tide of emotion gathered round his heart, finding no vent in any possible demonstration; bodily pain succeeded to the agony of his feelings, and by the time the chaise stopped at the door of his chambers, he was so ill that he could hardly get out.

He did not know, till that hope was disappointed, how dear had been the hope he cherished. Highly as he had prized it, he had not felt the inestimable worth of the treasure he had lost, till all expectation was at an end—the exquisite felicity of that future his fancy had painted, withdrawn.

His whole being seemed uprooted by the root. I cannot paint the confusion of his thoughts, the despair of his feelings: he was in that state in which men rush upon self-destruction,—in a sort of delirium of suffering—which is proof against every other sentiment.

There had been little that he had found to love in his gloomy existence; but having known nothing better, he was contented, if not happy. Now, his feelings all awakened, his thirst for happiness excited by hope—by what he mistook for certainty—a sudden check had been given to all this rapture, and life itself, in its most secret springs, seemed giving way.

Suicide was not in his nature; his mind was too well disciplined and balanced for such violence, even in this extremity; even had not the illness which now overpowered him been sufficient to allay in any man the thirst for such a liberation.

Bodily suffering lowers the tone of the mind; we resist it not; it comes upon us like some fatal, overpowering necessity; we crouch under the lash of the fury of pain.

His clerk hardly knew him as he got out of the chaise; he was become an aged man; his knees trembled and tottered as he ascended the staircase; he could hardly get into his little room, and with difficulty reached his bed.

Here, literally oppressed with the load of his misery, he lay without closing his eyes.

Her image, that look of irrepressible repugnance with which she had shrunk from him, was for ever before his eyes; he seemed to have forgotten everything else that had passed; he only saw that one look, that one gesture: he felt that she hated him.

Unhappy man! As he turned upon his cheerless pillow, striving vainly to shut out that picture from his mind, unpitied, solitary, and alone, without one human being in the wide world to console or to sympathise with him, one living creature to whom he could open his heart.

The idea of his mother was abhorrent to him; he knew too well the small share she would take in his regrets for one so penniless and forlorn: her taunts were all that yet seemed wanting to drive him mad.

He was a little aware of this danger; and yet he felt as if anything would be an escape from the agony of his thoughts.

He did not raise his head from his pillow, or endeavour to get up the next morning; his only wish seemed to be to shut out the light of day, and remain in his solitude of unchanging thought. He refused food of every kind; and the man seemed about to die.

If ever such a thing had happened in the annals of the human race, I believe this would have been an instance. I really believe Mr. Danby might have died, for his heart seemed broken, if he had not received Sir Herbert's letter.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when his clerk knocked at the door, and said there was an express come with a letter.

"Give it me," said Mr. Danby, only stretching out his hand, while the clerk advanced and held the candle so that he could read it.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry you took your departure so hastily. I question whether you have had so much experience of the sex as I have. I certainly found Emilia weeping when I went in to make my congratulations; but you must be a very unpractised wooer, indeed, if you do not know that this is the way young ladies always think it proper to receive such proposals. It is quite a matter of course. If you would not have your fair one shed far more *real* tears—tears of vexation and mortification at the desertion of a lover so *very* easily discouraged—pray let us have you down again. I will pledge my honour that you shall have a very different reception.—I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

"HERBERT MONTAGUE."

It perhaps saved Mr. Danby's life, that there was something in this letter which he so excessively disliked, as very considerably to diminish the revulsion of feeling which it might otherwise have occasioned.

He could not endure the idea of those natural and affecting tears, which had for so many hours been the subject of his ruminations—he could not endure the idea, flattering as it might have been, that they were merely the effect of female affliction.

To be recalled, too, by Sir Herbert in this way! He could

not but remember the look—that look which told him but too truly what her feelings then were; and led to the harassing suspicion, that over-persuasion of others, and not the relencings of her own heart, had occasioned this hasty change.

It was well for him that he had these salutary abatements of his joy. Could he but have placed confidence in her inclinations, his felicity would have killed him upon the spot.

As it was, she was to be his! The consequences of his return were certain; but an anxiety altogether new—a suspicion, a jealousy, a doubt, a hesitation—disturbed and embittered his sensations.

To return, however, instantly, that was a measure which admitted of neither doubt nor hesitation—the attraction was irresistible. Anxious, jealous, suspicious, he might be—full of distracting uncertainties and fears; but one thing was certain—she would be his; and had all the powers on earth clamoured to arrest the fatal vows, they could not have withheld him. Would she but consent to be his, he cared not whether he was wretched or happy.

In such confusion of ideas, in such distraction of thought and feeling, did the unhappy Mr. Danby drive once more up the avenue of the Oaks.

A day had intervened since the conversation between Emilia and her uncle; one more conversation of the same nature had taken place, and, if possible, Sir Herbert had been still more determined and explicit. He had also warned her to receive Mr. Danby well, and not to distress the feelings or destroy the confidence of her future husband by any school-girl inconsistency of behaviour.

But of this there was no danger.

She respected Mr. Danby's feelings far too much to trifle with them. Had she loved him, she might, in the gay coquetry of a fond and happy heart, have, like the rest of her playful sex, rejoiced in the dear delight of giving a little pain, which she could so amply recompense. But in the sorrowful gravity of her present temper all such petty perverseness was impossible.

She only wished that he might never find cause to feel so unhappy as she was, and she felt that such a regard as she had to give was indeed a poor return for a heart so sincere and devoted.

She had considered how deeply she was indebted to him. She had thought of the generous manner in which he had risked and lost his fortune for her sake; her only desire was now to do that which was right in return, and to treat him with the sincerity which was his due.

But now a new and anxious question arose—whether sincerity and justice required that she should confide to him the history of those feelings on which even in thought she was never again to dwell—whether what was henceforward to be as it had never been, might be treated as if it had never been.

Her resolution was at last taken. She determined to be

perfectly frank and undisguised in her expressions of indifference, but to bury that one fatal secret in silence.

If her declarations of indifference were not sufficient to determine him to give her up, she knew well allusion to a prior attachment would be equally without effect. But there was—for, in spite of everything, her sanguine nature would prevail—there was a hope that, after all, he might not be satisfied and might leave her.

In that case her uncle's threats might, perhaps, not be carried into execution to their full extent.

• CHAPTER XXVIII.

The darts of anguish fix not, where the seat
Of suffering is thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will Supreme,
For time and for eternity.—WORDSWORTH.

It was in the afternoon of the following day that Mr. Danby arrived at the Oaks.

The chaise stopped at the door; and Sir Herbert, in his anxiety to receive his guest, waiving his usual ceremonial habits, would not wait for him to be ushered into the dining-room, where he and his niece were sitting, but, going into the hall to meet him, shook him cordially by the hand.

This cordiality was wormwood to Mr. Danby's present feelings, as he was led into the room, where Emilia, who had started from her chair, her face all colours, was standing, like one in the act of endeavouring to get away, but for whom no possible means of escape remained. She had not thought it possible he could arrive so soon, or she would have been safe in her father's chamber.

But hurried and distressed as she was, she could not, even at the first glance, help being struck—being affected by the change which a few short hours had produced in Mr. Danby's appearance. He looked so extremely ill; and the depression, not to say misery, depicted in his air and countenance was such, that every kind feeling of her nature was excited. The devotion he had felt for her, the disinterested proofs of attachment he had given, all that had passed between them seemed to rush into her mind; and it was with a look of almost angelic gentleness that, recovering from her confusion and distress at the sight of this extremity of his, she came forward and offered her hand.

He took it in silence, for it was impossible for him to utter a word, and looking into her face, saw all the ingenuous singleness of her temper painted in its sweet and simple expression. The most painful of his feelings was dissipated as by enchantment at the sight, and his confidence in her goodness and truth at once restored. It was as if an almost insupportable load was removed from his heart.

Two such hearts must have ended by at least understanding each other thoroughly; and such happiness, or such sorrow, as it was in their destiny to endure, separate or together, would have been supportable, because it would have been in the natural course of things. Alas! for the evil influences from without, which marred, embittered, and absorbed the pure current of feelings, at once so deep and so generous.

It was at the moment that his piece of mind was returning, and his confidence in her restored, that Mr. Danby chanced to catch a glance at Sir Herbert's countenance reflected in an opposite mirror, and saw the peculiar expression with which he was looking at his niece; for, far from being in the least capable of understanding her feelings, he was accusing her in his own mind of the most artful duplicity; again his spirits were damped and his suspicions aroused.

It was impossible for anything to be more complete than were the distress and embarrassment of the two most deeply interested, and even Sir Herbert did not seem to know exactly how to proceed.

Emilia, who was utterly incapable of the sort of girlish coquetry which would have been implied by taking flight now, sat down and resumed the employment in which she had been engaged. It was far too serious and melancholy an affair to be treated in any other way by her than as a grave and serious business; and her simplicity and directness of purpose overcame those feelings of shyness which would have been natural to her upon such an occasion under other circumstances.

At last Sir Herbert, not exactly knowing what to do, rose from his chair by the fire, opened the window, for it was a beautiful clear frosty day, and walked out without ceremony upon the terrace.

He was no sooner gone than Mr. Danby rose, shut the window after him, took a chair, and approached Emilia.

He did not take her hand; he seemed little inclined to indulge in any expression of tenderness; his thoughts appeared as collected, his feelings as grave and earnest, as her own. This sort of sympathy in their mutual sensations at once touched and relieved her.

He sat gazing in a calm and melancholy manner, without lifting his eyes to her face, upon her hands, which were still employed at her work; and it was some time before he even could or would make the attempt to speak.

Was he then again near her—again tasting the ineffable happiness of being in her presence? Yet for a short time let him indulge in the felicity of such influences; a few seconds, the next sentence, and all might be dissolved.

So he sat, his heart softening and melting within him; while she, conscious of his gaze, and by a mysterious, hidden sympathy, half understanding his feeling, sat working with trembling hands and knocking knees, and the tears ready to start into her eyes.

At last, in a very low tone, he said,—

"Was it by your permission that your uncle wrote to recall me?"

"No," said she, in a voice equally low, but looking up with a countenance, a clear, unclouded eye, that said, "Betide what will, you shall hear nothing but truth from me."

Far from being disappointed, he seemed relieved by this direct and frank answer; he stretched out his hand and took hers, but it was as a friend would take it.

"Then, am I to understand that my arrival here was by you unexpected?"

"No; my uncle told me a few hours after he had despatched his letter what he had done."

"In time," he said, hesitating and turning still paler with anxiety, "in time to have recalled his letter?"

"Perhaps so."

"And you did not endeavour to recall it?"

"No, sir;" and here she coloured.

The beautiful rosy blush suffused her face, her neck, her bosom, so full of feeling, so lovely, as her eyes were now bent down, and her hand trembled.

"Then you did not wish it to be recalled? Oh, Emilia!" he exclaimed, in a low tone of deep and passionate entreaty, "only say *that*—for the love of all we have been taught to hope in heaven—say *that*, and have compassion on a creature who is dying for you!"

It was no conventional, misused expression in this case; his agony of suspense seemed to be rending his heart-strings.

She did not speak—she could not for the moment.

He looked at her; a sort of rapturous hope flashed into his eyes—the whole man gave way—and he fell from his chair, threw his arms round her, hid his face against her dress, and burst into a passion of tears.

She could not help being affected—she was deeply moved: but she very gently endeavoured to disengage herself; and he, recovering from the passion into which he had been betrayed, resumed his seat by her side, his head bent down, and listening with the deepest and most anxious attention, for he saw she was going to speak.

"My esteem—my regard—my gratitude for you, Mr. Danby—"

"Gratitude!" he repeated, almost with a gnash of the teeth.

"Let me use the word. Do not misunderstand me. I was going to say that these feelings, which I am sure I most deeply feel for you, make me wish to do in this case strictly—what is best and happiest for you—so far as I can."

She was already so confused that she had lost herself, and was not in the least saying what she meant to say.

"Happiness!" he repeated, with a faint smile, and shaking his head as much as to say, "that would be easily settled."

"My uncle," she said, recovering her courage. "*did* write his

letter unknown to me, and without my permission. But I did not ask him to recall it—because—I dared not.”

He now lifted up his head and looked at her as she went on. “He threatened to abandon me—and, far worse than that, abandon my father. I had no resource left. For myself, I could have braved all—for my father! This is how it has been.”

“Then,” said he, slowly, “I am to understand that you have suffered my recall, because you had no resource but me; and that if it had been possible by any exertions on your own part to escape me, you would have preferred it.”

“Yes, Mr. Danby, for I do not love you. And I believe nothing but an extremity such as mine can make it right for any one to give her hand unless her heart follows it. But had I not esteemed you as I do, not the tortures of the rack itself should have forced me to this step.”

“That is spoken like yourself!” said he, and he bent down and kissed her hand with almost reverence. “Full of truth and rectitude are all your thoughts and feelings! Your love!—I should, indeed, have been a fool to have aspired to *that*! To have gained your esteem is more than felicity enough for me. Yes, Emilia, I deserve your confidence; take in me a protector for yourself and your father. I will not betray the trust; my life shall be devoted to make you both happy. And as for me—” but his tones were more rapturous still than the expressions of rapture which followed.

While her poor heart was growing colder and colder within her, her poor pale face paler, and her trembling hands more shaking at this unexpected termination—at this unhesitating acceptance of what she had to offer—at this rapturous expression of felicity, which, could he but have defined the feelings of her sinking heart, might, indeed, well have been spared.

The idea of giving her up, of making—as she had sometimes, with a sort of desperate hope, imagined that he might—some compromise, some arrangement for her with her uncle—this, it was evident, never once had crossed his mind.

He seemed to see the necessity under which she lay as absolute, and to regard himself as her only possible refuge; and so, in truth, he did. The thought never once suggested itself to him that he might, with a generosity which would have been almost unparalleled, interfere by his own exertion to render her independent of himself. If such an idea had presented itself, I believe him to have been capable of the sacrifice; but it did not.

To marry him, as seemed natural enough, appeared in his eyes to be the proper and legitimate solution of all her difficulties; nor was it probable that a prospect so full of delight should strike him as one of such unmixed wretchedness for her. He saw she did not love him—he was prepared for that; and when he made up his mind to relinquish the inexpressible bliss of possessing with her hand her heart, he thought only of himself, and of the necessity of reconciling his own mind to the depriva-

tion of a blessing so immense. He never once thought of the misery it might be to her—this sacrifice of the hand without the heart; he had not any standard by which to measure in the slightest degree the extent of the sacrifice.

He could not but believe that he should make her happy. Every man believes this—every man when in love resolves on this, and thinks himself ready to peril life for the felicity of the object; and Mr. Danby's heart was as full as any heart could be of purposed kindness to herself and to her father. But this was the extent of his generosity. She had not, indeed, appealed to it. She had not felt *that* to be possible. She saw how deeply his happiness was engaged, and she felt the injustice, after all he had lost for hers and her father's sake, to ask him to add the sacrifice of his happiness to the heavy account. One life was to be immolated to the other, it was plain; and equally plain was it that hers must be the one.

They parted, engaged to each other.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Bear up,

Yet still bear up—no bark did e'er,

By stooping to the storm of fear,

Escape the tempest's wrath.—BEAUMONT.

YES, they were engaged.

She had passed her word—she had received his—she had bound herself by the irrevocable tie—she was no longer her own. The fair prospect of that future which spreads so bright and beautiful before the sanguine eye of youth had suddenly shut in; her life was at an end, and she had scarcely begun it.

How melancholy is the anticipation of the land of shadows and death to the spirit not yet subdued by suffering to desire its own departure! How melancholy to the young and fervent being perishing by inches under a fatal consumption! But even this prospect is less mournful, this anticipation less utterly dark and dreary, than that which lies before the young, imaginative, and loving creature, who must live on when she has ceased to live.

The heart of the unhappy girl seemed congealed—all the warm pulses of her animated, affectionate nature seemed to petrify at their source. Yes, she had loved with a tenderness, the full force of which she had not even divined till she had severed herself from its object for ever.

You should have seen her—hackneyed comparison! but, alas! too true—like a withered flower, cankered by some blighting yet hidden cause, all the sweet, blooming promise of its opening beauty faded—a poor, pale, sicklied, and discoloured thing.

Every gesture—her very step—the carriage of her head—the colour of her cheek—the lustre of her eye—all changed and faded, and spiritless and sad.

She could not help this—in spite of all her resolution and all

her goodness, and all her generous desire, though unhappy herself, to make Mr. Danby happy, it was in vain. Every hour she felt herself growing weaker and weaker. She almost hoped the sacrifice would never be consummated, and that she should die.

Had it not been for her father, indeed, the desire to die would have been so strong, that it is more than probable, I think, that she would have died; for the love of life, certainly, is an excitement that serves in struggles of this nature to keep in life. The idea of leaving him, unsheltered and alone, in his present forlorn condition, still gave existence an interest. The good and pious daughter was preserved by that holy feeling.

Perhaps it may be thought, intensely as she suffered, that she might have struggled longer against her fate—that it was natural she should, that she *would* have made an effort to engage the generosity of Mr. Danby to release her.

After the first conversation with her uncle, the truth was that she had abandoned hope. There was something in his tone and manner which carried conviction to her mind that his resolution was taken, and that not only his interest and his judgment were decided, but that his conscience was satisfied—that he imagined that he was doing what was right, wise, and reasonable, in forcing her into a measure which was evidently for her own interest.

She had made one more appeal—for she would leave nothing undone—it left her only the conviction that all further appeal would be useless. She yielded passively to what she felt to be an absolute necessity. She was hemmed in on every side—there was nothing else to be done.

It is easy to talk of earning one's bread—the difficulty is how, desolate and unfriended as she was, to begin. Every one with whom she was connected would have concurred to obstruct that path—every person and circumstance around her to impel her into the other.

Like the unhappy Jenny, in the beautiful Scotch ballad, her lover, and he not even a declared lover, was far away; but, had he been within reach, could she have called upon him for assistance? Impossible, under the circumstances of vague uncertainty with respect to his intentions in which it had pleased him to let her remain.

The appeal to Mr. Danby was equally out of the question. He, a stranger, who had already lost so considerable a part of his fortune in her behalf—to ask him to take upon himself the support of her father and herself!—it must be in a romance, indeed, and in one very unlike real life, where such a thing could be thought of.

He had made her an honourable proposal, and offered an honourable refuge for herself and her father. Her uncle, the only friend on whom she could have the slightest claim, had resolutely determined to force her into this marriage. Was it not more honourable to herself, more grateful and kind to

Mr. Danby to accept, without further vain and useless hesitations, the necessity laid upon her?

Such was her view of her situation; and under such a view she acted, whether rightly or wrongly, I confess myself unable to determine; but this I know, that a delicate sense of right, after all, revolts from such a sacrifice; because a secret consciousness seems to exclaim, that in this one relation of social life sentiment is all in all, and that no duty can be stringent enough to oblige us to that great blasphemy against nature, the conjugal relation without prevailing love; at least, without a heart disengaged and at ease.

The feeling which haunted her—at times taking almost the form of remorse—was that, after all, she had done wrong—that she had wronged Colonel Lenox, Mr. Danby, and herself. This was the heaviest part of her sufferings: it prevented her reaping that sweet reward and support of inward peace, which till now she had found the accompaniment of every effort in the cause of duty, however painful.

The only alleviation of her distress she found in the conduct of Mr. Danby.

His happiness for the present seemed, as it was, without alloy. Satisfied of her truth and sincerity, the acceptance of his hand was to him the warrant of perfect felicity. Without the slightest suspicion of her secret preference for another, he, with the security of one little accustomed to analyse his own, far less the feelings of others, doubted not, when once quietly settled with her father under his protection, that the pale cheek, which he could not but observe, the faltering gait, the trembling hand, would recover all the bloom and spirit of other days.

His knowledge of all she had suffered blinded him as to the cause of what she was now suffering: he, if he thought of it at all, and he did not think much of it, attributed it to what had passed since her mother's death; quite sufficient, in his opinion, to have destroyed the health and spirits of a young and tender woman.

He little suspected that strokes of fortune such as these, which frequently shatter the proud being of the stronger nature—of him who in such things too often places the sum of his existence—fall inert and powerless against the gentle but passive courage of his more disinterested companion.

He little knew that Emilia could have cheerfully laboured for her bread, toiled unremittingly for those she loved, and been cheerful and happy; while ease, competency, luxury, with the man who was indifferent to her, paled her cheek and almost broke her heart.

His happiness was, therefore, for the present complete; and when she saw the serenity of heartfelt peace which gave sweetness even to *his* countenance—when she witnessed all his earnest, yet perhaps not exactly well-judged endeavours to please her, her honest heart was filled with a mixture of secret remorse

and almost tender compassion for a love so devoted, and without return, and with the sincerest resolutions to make him happy.

To disguise from his observation every sentiment that could have given him pain, and to repay his attachment with careful duty and gentle observance, was all, alas! she could promise herself to do; but that, at least, it should be her strenuous effort to perform.

Her manner to him was thenceforward quite unlike that of the affianced mistress in the noontide of her reign of a day. Those who have given their heart feel, in the joyous confidence of the worth of that which they have bestowed, as if by right they received the short idolatry—by right held their captive in chains—by right indulged the sweet and passing tyranny. But she, who had given nothing, with a delicacy of thought of which few, perhaps, might be capable, felt that the more it cost her to bestow herself, the less she really bestowed—that she was a heavy debtor, where love would have been more than over-payment for any debt—that she had no right to give the passing, playful pain, where she had no recompense in return to bestow. It became her sole study to make up the immense and measureless deficiency by all that external observance could do.

Many of my readers will, I know, be incapable of comprehending this refinement of sentiment. It is certain that, most happily for himself, Mr. Danby did not. Her gentle manners, her attention to meet his wishes, the tranquil submission to all he planned and proposed, were to him, little skilled in the female heart, a source of ineffable satisfaction. He knew not how much more precious, from such a creature, a little careless waywardness would have been.

En passant, I may remark that this was, after all, an unfortunate beginning for the future. For a man so entirely out of the habit of domestic life as he was, it would have been desirable that a little of the above playful tyranny and exertion of power in the mistress might have prepared him, before he actually became a husband to consider that his life must henceforth no longer flow, as it had till then done, in one uninterrupted course of almost instinctive actions, succeeding each other with the unbroken regularity of the hours and days they filled; and regulated by little or no reflection either upon himself or upon others.

No one had been yet dependent upon his attention for happiness, upon his care and anxiety for their well-being. But now there was one whose feelings would not be always his feelings, her wants his wants, her desires his wishes—something must be given up on his part—inclination, occupation, time, thought—and that all was not to be received, and nothing repaid.

Unfortunately this lesson, which every man does or ought to receive in his days of courtship, Mr. Danby altogether escaped. Partly from the excess of generous and delicate feeling on the side of Emilia, and partly, alas! that in her present despondency and dearth of feeling, all things were alike to her, every

circumstance indifferent, when no circumstance could bring happiness.

To do her duty by him—to repay the debt which his generous and disinterested conduct had laid upon her—not to disappoint expectations of felicity, the very simplicity of which touched her in spite of all—was her only endeavour, and the only endeavour in which she could find peace.

After a few days spent in this manner, it was necessary that Mr. Danby should return to London.

He had arranged all the business part of the affair with Sir Herbert; Emilia had not even been consulted upon a single point; and her uncle's officious interference was once more against her.

In matters of pounds, shillings, and pence, in anything which regarded the substantial business of life, Sir Herbert was accustomed to consider women as mere ciphers—too insignificant to be, in the least degree, brought into consultation. We have seen the evil effect this habit of thought produced in Mr. Wyndham's family; and, under the evil destiny of his unfortunate daughter, its ill consequences did not end here.

The manner in which Sir Herbert arranged all in which she was most intimately concerned, without even consulting her, and the passive indifference with which, in her present state of mind, she acquiesced in everything, were bad lessons for this neophyte in the niceties of domestic intercourse. It insensibly laid the foundation of a habit of thought which could not be favourable to any woman's happiness.

And here let me beg of you again to observe, how entirely it was that want of habits of reflection upon himself and his tendencies—upon all self-discipline, in short—which rendered a man of Mr. Danby's valuable character and excellent understanding so entirely the creature of any influences to which he might chance to be exposed; and, when those were not favourable, placed the happiness of all dependent upon him in jeopardy.

It was settled that the marriage should take place at the Oaks so soon as the necessary preliminaries could be possibly arranged—Sir Herbert suspending his proceedings towards a foreclosure and sale till the mansion was cleared of its present inhabitants; and that after the ceremony Mr. Danby should immediately convey his young wife and father-in-law to his residence in London. Even the almost indispensable wedding journey Sir Herbert decided was here to be done away with; for who was to undertake the care of her father during an absence, however brief?

Emilia, as I have said, who thought with little pleasure upon any journey *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Danby, acquiesced in this arrangement without a remark; her only wish—what wish she still had—was not to be separated from her father: she came to him the closer for having purchased the right to remain with him so dearly.

He was the last relic she retained of that former life—the all that yet existed of that paradise, the gates of which were now slowly closing behind her. Besides, though she could have cheerfully left him for a few days under the care of Biggs, had it been necessary, she felt that, as he must leave the Oaks, it was desirable she should be present, to watch the effect so great a change might produce upon his state of mind.

Her uncle took care to let her know that her father was to vacate the Oaks when she did.

So Mr. Danby set out for London, to make his arrangements with his mother, and prepare a home wherein to lodge the treasure he had obtained.

CHAPTER XXX.

Querelleuse, avare, et jalouse,

Rien ne la contentoit, rien n'étoit comme il faut.—LA FONTAINE.

THEY are sitting together in that parlour, or drawing-room, if you will, in Charlotte Street, which I have before described: the son, with rather rueful and abashed looks, his dress more in disorder than ever, and his feet upon the little fender, is listening to the exclamations and shrill vituperations of his excited mother.

The old lady is sitting in the usual arm-chair, and, according to custom, without the slightest symptom of employment of any kind about her, screaming rather than speaking, with voice harsh and discordant as that of a cockatoo.

Her son is too much vexed to be amused, and yet half inclined to be sorry, and to think that she is in the right—at least, that she has quite a right to the relief which she is giving herself under her present distraction and surprise—though not the least in the world inclined to undo what he has done.

“Such folly! such madness! such blind and wilful extravagance! such unaccountable and unheard-of weakness! such ruin! such—lack-a-day! And could I ever have thought it? And oh! your poor father! and how *we* slaved! and now it is *all* gone! all flung away upon a pretty, well-dressed, beggarly minx! You might as well have thrown it into the kennel. Oh! if your father could have known, would he have worked as he did? Yes, young man, from morning to night in his chambers, hardly allowing himself food or rest to save—and all for what? to have it given away—thrown away upon these Wyndhams! And who are these Wyndhams, pray? What have they done? Idle, extravagant, vicious, negligent fools! who have never earned one penny of their own, and have flung away over head in this manner what others laboured and sweated to earn for them. Oh! son! son!”

An humble look, as of a man who is submitting to be thoroughly scolded, and a sigh, were all that her son could answer.

"But that is not the worst; to come and bring this poor beggar home to me, to prance about in all her laces and fal-lals, and lord it over your poor mother! Ay, ay! I never spent your father's hard-earned money in dress and vanities. I denied myself almost bread, to save for you; and now this high-bred madam is to come; and, after you have thrown away half your fortune upon her father, you bring her among us to throw away all the rest upon *her*! But never think it: I shall like to see her parading it before your poor plain mother. But your mother, I can tell you, is no fool, plain and homely as she may look"—glancing at her rusty black gown—"and I tell you, sir—"

But he was beginning to get tired, and thought he had been scolded enough for this time, as much as his duty as a son required; and so, giving himself a rousing shake, he said,—

"Enough, mother! You have said quite enough, more than enough, I assure you. As for the money, it is gone, and we shall none of us see any more of it. And, as for the young lady, you need not be afraid of her."

"Afraid of *her*!" she cried, with a contemptuous "humph!"

"She is a remarkably gentle, sensible, discreet, and amiable young lady, or I should never have wished to make her your daughter-in-law, mother."

Much Mr. Danby had reflected upon any of these qualities, when she gave him the rose and jasmine upon the terrace that evening! but, as he luckily had stumbled upon them, it was, perhaps, natural he should take credit to himself for his wisdom and perspicuity in this matter.

"Mighty well, mighty well!—that is what all you men in love say. But for all I could ever discover, you prefer a pretty face and a well-fancied sleeve-knot to all the virtue and housewifery that ever came together."

"May be so," said her son. "I have never reflected upon the subject. All I know is, that I am truly attached to Miss Wyndham; that I am sure she is a young lady to do her duty by you, as she has, in the most exemplary manner, performed it by her own parents; and, therefore, I hope," he added, with something of authority in his manner, "that I may rely, mother, upon her being received in the same spirit and feeling on your part."

"Hoity, toity! Here's a tone and manner, forsooth! Spirit and feeling!—indeed! Nay, Master Matthew, I don't know you to-night. Is this the way, in your new capacity, you mean to begin to treat your mother? 'My son is my son till he gets him a wife.'

"Ay, ay!—turn your back upon your old mother, do! I have only lived with you for richer for poorer, for sickness and for health, toiled, tended, suffered, sorrowed for you—only for forty-five years! Oh, it's nothing at all!" she cried, her voice beginning to falter; "forget it all at once for this new face."

"Mother, don't talk so," he said, for his worthy heart always

responded to this string. "You mistake me, indeed; I shall never forget what I owe to your care and kindness—the only kind friend I ever had in my life. Pray, do not speak in that way any more. I assure you, this young lady is formed to add to both our happiness. You cannot think how sweet, and obliging, and gentle, and good-tempered she seems to be; and if you were to see her duty and piety to her poor father, who is in a sad state of mental and bodily health, and who I have promised her she shall never part from —"

He was interrupted by a shriek of dismay from his mother.

"Her father!—Two beggars, instead of one!"

She lifted up her hands in a sort of agony.

"Why, mother, I beg of you, don't talk in this manner. Don't use the word 'beggars,' I pray you, in that offensive manner! You, who are so just an advocate for filial duty, would you separate a child from a parent in so miserable and defenceless a state? Pray don't use the word beggar any more."

"Beggars they are, and beggars I'll call them, if they behave themselves like beggars. It's a new world to me—tutored and schooled by my own son. Mustn't say this, and mustn't say that! Well, well, well! when are you going to be married?"

"As soon as I can prepare a home to receive her; and that, mother, is the matter I am come to consult with you upon. What had I better do?"

The old lady gave a deep, heavy, and impatient sigh, as she submitted to what she plainly saw was an inevitable necessity; and, something comforted by this application to her for advice and assistance, she leaned back in her chair, crossed her mittened hands and arms, and put on a considering face.

"Why, Matthew," she said, after having taken a little time for reflection before she spoke, which, when she was cool, she always did, but not when she was warm—"why, Matthew, as you have justly remarked, for the money, it is irrecoverably lost and gone, and there is an end of it. Easily said; but as it's gone, it's no longer there; and you, who were a man well enough to do a week ago, are now a poor one."

"Not very poor, mother, after all," he said cheerfully; "I hope there is plenty, and more than plenty left, for all that I shall ever want."

"Ah! son, son!" she cried, shaking her head, "how like a mere child you *can* talk! Plenty, and more than plenty! Ay, ay! for you, true enough; but here's a young wife, and maybe a young family growing up around you."

Oh, how the picture, grim as was the painter, thrilled through his heart!

"And you no longer young, Matthew! And you have no more idea, as I tell you, of the expenses of a family now-a-days than the babby unborn. Suppose you should die early; and suppose you should find what you have got was *not* plenty, and you should leave your family in the case of this Miss Wyndham?"

He lifted up his head, and gave her his serious attention, as he always did, when she appeared to speak reason.

"Now mind *me*, Matthew: The grand secret of safety in this world is not to begin too *high*. It's the beginning too *high* that ruins many a young couple, who otherwise might have been respectable and happy."

Irrefragable; but she forgot to consider what would have been too *high*, or what might be too *low*—lower than was in the slightest degree either prudent or necessary.

"You are not a young man now, Matthew; and, if you *were* to get on the wrong side of care, who knows you would be spared to recover yourself again? Take your mother's advice—begin prudently. Why need we think of any other home but this? There is this house and your chambers. This house has always been too big for me, since your poor father died; only for love of him, and a little foolish nonsense, I didn't ever like to change it. You shall have it, son, for the present; let the young lady, as you call her, come home here. There will be no chopping and changing—the most expensive thing in the world. There is your poor father's and my room standing empty ever since he died—you shall have that; and there's your present room for this old man, as we *must* have him. And one housekeeping, and fire, and so on, will do for all of us; and if a family comes, why, I may take myself off, or you may go into a larger house. We can change any day we find it convenient."

Never had imagination less dwelt on houses, tables, furniture, or external matters of this kind than had his; but there was something in this proposal, obtuse as were his perceptions, that he felt would not quite do. It was not the house; he felt that he would be rapturously happy with *her* in that or any house; but his first pictures of domestic bliss were considerably marred by the addition of his mother's stiff figure and acrimonious voice and countenance.

According to his usual way of being led by his feelings, he did not like it, and he thought it would not do.

"I am not very fond," said he, "of the plan of two families under one roof. I don't know, but I think it might prove disagreeable to all sides. As to the house—"

His mother looked considerably affronted and said—

"I don't know what you mean by disagreeable to all sides. I am sure I could live with anybody, and I should think anybody on earth might live with *me*."

He did not reflect how far that might be true or not. He usually believed, without examination, all she asserted in cases such as these; but he felt, and could not help feeling, that he should like to have his wife to himself, making his tea, and reading the newspapers, as it used to be in the breakfast-room at the Oaks.

"I dare say all you say may be true," said he, obstinate, for the first time in his life, "but I don't think it would quite do. There is her father."

"Hang her father!" cried Mrs. Danby, impatiently; "that troublesome old fool was sure to be in the way. Mind my words, Matthew; this may be the first time, but it, assuredly, will not be the last, by hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of times, that you will repent you were so soft as to burden yourself with her old father. But I tell you there is your own old room."

"But it would not be half big enough; his man-servant must sleep in the room with him."

Another shriek of horror and despair. Mrs. Danby's afflictions accumulated like a flood upon her.

"His man-servant?"

"To be sure, mother, he could not get on at all without his man-servant."

But she only shook her head in bitterness of spirit. She was beginning to feel her resolution give way, overpowered with this spring-tide of unexpected calamity.

* He did not quite penetrate the depth of her misery, but he was glad she was silent; and, determined to get through at once, in some hurry he went on.

"And so, mother, I think, if you please, you had better look out for another house for us, as nearly as you can in your own neighbourhood; and then we shall be like one family, though not under one roof."

"Humph!" she exclaimed, with a cross grunt; "and pray, Matthew, why need I get *another* house? This house, I suppose, won't be good enough for you next?"

"Nay, but mother, you quite mistake me: how could I think of turning you out after—"

"Oh! never mind that," she replied with alacrity. "I and Susan can get a lodging hard by, if that's all; and perhaps it will be best so" (the idea first smiling on her mind); "and then I can be near to overlook your young wife's housekeeping. I dare say, poor thing! she's as ignorant of what's what as all those poor helpless creatures are; and she'll be robbed, and pillaged, and you half-ruined with London servants and extortionate tradespeople. I think they get worse and worse every day: and Susan and I can put her in the way. Yes, yes, it will be best. In a lodging, I shall only want Susan, and a char-woman now and then; so there will be something saved; and then you can come straight to your old home, with your young wife. And I hope, with all your nonsense, you'll be contented."

With all his nonsense, he was not yet *quite* contented. He looked round the room with that new sense of the fitness of things that I have noted once before, and seemed to feel that still something was wanted. Not much, however.

In comparison with his cheerless chambers, this dull and dark house might be pronounced light and cheerful; and he had from his childhood so entirely associated it with ideas of comfort, that he never once reflected upon the effect it might produce upon the fair inhabitant of the Oaks. He thought the

furniture looked considerably fly-blown, and somewhat dirty and shabby; and he said, doubtingly, while looking about him—

"I think we must make a little improvement in the furniture."
 "I should think that was the *last* thing that was necessary," his mother replied tartly. "After all the money she has made you lose, and coming here without a penny in her pocket, and, maybe, hardly a gown to her back, I should think what had been good enough for your mother might be good enough for her; but 'set a beggar on horseback,' and la! how they do ride!"

"I have begged of you, mother, not to use that term again," said he, rather angrily. "I am old enough to be judge of my own affairs; and depend upon it, beggar or not, in this transaction *I* am the real gainer."

His mother frowned, put up her lip contemptuously, but, with the instinct of her kind, knew that she had gone far enough, and was silent.

"I will have a new carpet, new curtains, and new chairs," said her son, with unusual authority in his manner.

"I will this—and I will that—and I will here—and I will there," grumbled his mother. "Very well, Mr. Matthew—I will—set about and get 'em for yourself then."

Not all her love of managing matters for him could subdue her affronted feelings at the idea of new chairs, curtains, and carpet being necessary for this daughter-in-law, whom she began to regard every hour with increasing envy, jealousy, and dislike.

"Nay, nay, mother, don't be unreasonable. You know I know no more than a child how to get this sort of things. So, if you won't oblige me," he added, looking round with a sigh, "why, I suppose I must do without; but it would have made me very comfortable."

"But—"

"Lawk-a-day, madam!" cried Susan, when she heard her young master, as she still called him, was going to be married; and her mistress, according to custom, poured forth to this faithful confidant all her complaints and lamentations, ending, as a climax, with the unheard-of demand to new-furnish the sitting-room.

"My stars, madam! why, you wouldn't go for to have a wedding come back to such a house as this! Bless me, madam! why, Master Matthew is your only son; and a wedding without a bit of furniture! Why, I never heard the like. New carpet, chairs, and curtains? Ay, to be sure! And master's, and your old bed-room too. Do you think that fusty old green serge will do for the bride! Why, I wouldn't have to do with such a stupid, unlightsome wedding—no, not for the Ingies! Never tell me—"

"How can you talk in such a childish, ridiculous, senseless manner, Susan?" said her mistress, angrily.

"Nay, nay," said Susan, stoutly, "if anybody's childish, and ridiculous, and senseless, I'm sure it's not me. I'm not going

for to waste no more than any one. There's nothing I abhor like waste! But, as wise Solomon says, 'There's a time to save and a time to give; a time to spare and a time to spend,' and if ever on earth there is a time, a wedding's the time for spending."

Her mistress groaned. "I am sure his wedding-day is like to be the heaviest day in my life to me."

"Never think of it, madam. The heaviest day! Why, it will be the blesseddest, happiest, blithesomest day that ever fell on this house since you and master married, and then I was not there to see. But I'm sure it will be a blessed day to me; and if to me, why not to you, madam? Only think of a bride! a pretty young lass, all with her white gown and pink ribbons! Why, madam, it will be like the blessed angel that shone to Hannah of old coming into the house. It's a fine thing when a son is born, and the voice of an infant first echoes in a chamber; but it's better still when that son takes to himself a wife, and brings a sweet, young, fair bride into the house of his fathers! But here, above all things, it will be blessed, where, bating master and Master Matthew, nothing pretty has been seen for years, save you and me. Why, madam, it's enough to make one's heart dance!

"I'm sure," pursued Susan, while her mistress rocked herself in her chair, and she mended the fire—"I'm sure I was afeard Master Matthew was going for to die an old bachelor, he looked so rusty-fusty like. He never, from a boy, *did* look like anything but a queer little old man—though we did love him so, we must own that. And I, for one, feel quite obliged to this young lady—for, if she's as young as you say, she must be good-natured and pretty—for taking of him. And as to her being poor—why, bless us! what's the use of a man toiling his life out at stupid law, and mayn't please himself, after all? I'm sure if any one has a right for to please himself, that's our Matthew!"

"How like a child you talk! Who wants to hinder him from pleasing himself, if he'd only do it in a more reasonable manner?"

"Please one's self, is to please one's self," said Susan, stoutly; "and when one's talking of that, I don't see what reasonable has to do with the matter. Besides, I say, and will say it till I'm black in the face, that if the poor young lady was dead ruined, as you, madam, are pleased for to call it, Master Matthew couldn't do a prettier thing than take her. And this I will say of our Matthew—for I love him all as one as if he were my own child—he may be queer and old-fashioned looking (and so we all are for the like of that), but he's got a warm, generous heart under the old skeleton of his; and that's more than we can all of us say for ourselves, at all times, I'm afeard."

"But the father!" persisted her mistress, in a querulous tone.

But Susan was beginning to get by this time out of temper. She flung all the coals in her scuttle, in a wild burst of indignation, upon the fire, and growing red in the face, said—

"Her father!—And is it *you* that object to her for doing her duty by her sick father! I wish you'd see how you'd like to be served so by your own son! I'm a-grieved for you, madam, to hear you talking and groaning in this fashious manner. Take care lest you call down a cursing instead of a blessing upon us, as that wicked prophet with the jackass did. I'm sure it makes me all harrowed like to hear you, when you *will* talk in this manner; and I wish there mayn't come, sooner or later, a something to this house, which some of us, if they don't take care, will deserve."

And so saying, having brushed up the hearth in a prodigious agitation and hurry, she seized upon her coal-scuttle and departed; leaving her mistress, as usual, quite subdued; for, as it generally happens in such cases, she, who tyrannised over everybody, cherished at her elbow a favourite, who, by her despotism, avenged the slavery of the rest of the world.

In all their disputes, Susan had invariably the last word; but I must do her the justice to add, she was usually as much in the right as she had been during the last conversation.

I need not tell you that, under auspices such as were Susan's, who really was almost as much enchanted with the prospect of the wedding as if it had been her own, the house in Charlotte Street was rendered as cheerful and tolerable as circumstances would admit.

There was no time for painting, but Susan and her myrmidons scrubbed and scoured. Not only were new carpets, chairs, and curtains bought, but a very pretty paper, as Susan thought, was put up in the sitting-room. As the young lady came from the country, she thought, she said, she would like something rural, so the paper was covered all over with roses, jasmines, and groups of shepherds, with their shepherdesses, dancing on the green. The large, gaudy pattern made the room look yet smaller than it was before; but even Mr. Danby, when he recognised his favourite roses and jasmines, as he went poking and peering about, with one eye shut and the other open, thought it looked very green and pretty. A chintz of the same description, covered with immense flaunting flowers, adorned the windows; and the carpet was as glaring as red and orange could make it. It was well the wedding was in winter. The rest of the house, except that it was thoroughly scoured, seemed in its original state of dinginess and decay, save the apartment she called master's, in which she put new curtains also; though she, who was never wasteful, quite agreed with her mistress, that the old dining-room chairs would do very well for the bedroom. So here, with the exception of a small bed, destined for Biggs, in Mr. Wyndham's room, Susan's extravagance ended; and Mrs. Danby, having paid the bills in dignified silence, prepared to yield possession of the house, so soon as her new daughter-in-law should arrive.

Not all Susan's rhetoric could, however change the evil dis-

positions with which she awaited her—nay, Susan, like many other unsuccessful advocates, injured, it may be suspected, her own cause by her own eloquence. Moreover, I fear, her efforts to procure what she thought a proper bridegroom's suit for her master resulted in making him look more awkward and ugly upon his wedding-day than he had ever before done in his life.

He felt excessively ill at ease in his new clothes, and would have done so adorned upon any occasion; but now, excited, hurried, agitated by ten thousand conflicting emotions, the embarrassment of his new dress was distressing to him, in a degree one could scarcely have expected from a man of his sense. He submitted, however, to this, as he did to other female impositions. He was quite passive in the hands of Susan, taking it upon her word that all she required of him was absolutely necessary—he was but as a lamb in her hands.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth,
Where nothing lives but crosses, cares, and grief.—KING RICHARD II.

WHAT preparation had Emilia been making in the mean time for that day, the expectation of which, at times, seemed to come over her like some wild, distracting dream?

When Mr. Danby had left her, and she was alone with her own thoughts and reflections, the idea that it really was to be, that she was so soon to quit all familiar faces, and all the long-loved scenes around her, and go and live with Mr. Danby—be actually his—be bound to him by the closest ties—be his wife!—seemed like some monstrous exaggeration of delirium.

Often, in that state of excitement produced by a sleepless night, did she lie planning all the most impossible schemes by which she was yet to escape her fate;—the letters she was to write—the prayers she was to use—the unanswerable arguments she was to employ: then, tranquillised by the hope, she would fall asleep to dream of Lenox and her mother. Once more she was happy—the horrible burden was removed—she was free—she could do as she pleased! But what was it that whispered all the time, No? What was it that terrified her in the midst of this felicity? Then she would start, awake, look round, wonder where she was, and what had happened! Then the truth—the dreadful, real truth—would steal slowly into her mind. Alas! and then, like poor William in the ballad, she would “shake in every limb, and, raving, leave her bed!” and clothed in her white dressing-gown, and gliding like a ghost, would pass the gallery, enter the chamber of her mother, fall on her knees, her poor arms clasped and stretched upon the bed, and groan, as it would have melted your heart to hear. In the day-time she was more composed; the attention she unremittingly paid to her father relieved her mind in some degree from the pressure

of the ever-present idea, and at least dissipated the delusions of her fancy. She had not even yet ventured to tell him what had been decided upon; his feelings were so ungoverned and querulous, such returns of ancient pride and temper were mingled with such alternations of depression, and a sense of the lowest degradation and remorse, that it was impossible to say now he would take it.

And, poor thing! with something of the same delusion that her poor father indulged in when putting on his mourning, perhaps she hesitated and made excuses to herself for her delay, from the faint idea that that would "settle" the matter.

It was in her moments of composure that she collected Colonel Lenox's letters to her mother, intending to destroy them all; but her heart failed her; they were only to her mother: she thought she might innocently keep them. She sealed them up, and deposited them at the very bottom of her writing-table, which Sir Herbert, in his present good humour and liberality, had told her to consider as still her own, as when the sale came he should order it to be purchased for her.

She was past being troubled with any nice scruples as to such little obligations; and the idea once given, secretly resolved to make it her first petition to Mr. Danby, that he would purchase for her various trifling articles of furniture which stood in her mother's bedroom. One letter of Colonel Lenox's, however, she had thought it incumbent upon her to destroy.

The first moment after she had quitted the breakfast-room, engaged to Mr. Danby, it had been taken from her bosom, and a small taper being lighted, she had, without opening it again, committed it to the flames. As the blackened cinders of what had once been a treasure so inestimable fell upon the candlestick, she felt an inexpressible longing to gather them together, and form some reliquary, in which to deposit them to be preserved for ever. She resisted this wish, carefully collected them in her hand, as if not one morsel should be mingled with the common dust, deposited them in the red cave of a burning fire, and watched till every single atom had been restored to the elements.

It was like affixing a seal to a paper.

It was a solemn act: that done—and all was over.

She had forgotten the little scattered poems which still lay in the small drawer of her writing-desk—whatever was not in *his* handwriting was too insignificant not to be overlooked.

The news of the intended marriage soon spread about the house, and Simpson received it with many tears. She wished to follow her young lady's fortunes whatever they might be; but Emilia resisted this temptation. Simpson's wages were far higher than what she thought it proper to ask Mr. Danby to pay for any personal attendant upon herself; besides, there were remembrances linked to Simpson which she thought it her duty never again, if possible, to revive. With the exception of Biggs to attend upon her father, she settled with herself to take

up her burden and commence alone the path of her new and painful pilgrimage.

Day passed slowly—yet, ah! too quickly—over day. And there was no rescue. Nothing arose to retard—everything conspired to advance the event, with that slow yet certain progression of circumstances in one direction which we may observe when a thing is to be.

The wedding-day arrived.

Mr. Danby had, with the exception of two hurried visits, found it quite impossible to leave London during this interval; and during these few short hours, business and Sir Herbert had so absorbed his time and attention, that he had scarcely had opportunity even to converse with, far less observe her narrowly.

Simpson had prepared for her a simple wedding-dress, which she was to wear, of course, for the ceremony, and then resume her mourning.

By Sir Herbert's command, in which Mr. Danby most cordially acquiesced, the wedding was to be as private as possible. Sir Herbert was to give her away—there was not even to be a bridesmaid. Good Simpson would attend her to the altar.

She was, as usual, quite passive; but certainly this excessive privacy was a great relief to her feelings. After the ceremony was over, she and Mr. Danby were to enter one chaise, her father and Biggs another—they were to bid adieu to the Oaks for ever, and take the road to London.

She had been for some days employed in her preparations before she left the Oaks. The packing up of what little she intended to take with her had soon been accomplished. She had taking nothing but that which was strictly necessary of things even belonging to her own wardrobe: her few personal ornaments and trinkets, and all her other little possessions, with the exception of one or two books, she had left with Simpson, who was to dispose of them, and pay all those small tradesmen in the neighbourhood who, she thought, might suffer from delay in the settlement of their accounts.

The day before her wedding was not spent as too many young girls, I fear, spend the hours preceding that solemn one on which the whole fate of the future depends—their idle fancies filled with trifles. It was passed by Emilia in solemn communion with herself—in endeavours to review and arrange her feelings—to take a just view of her new situation, its duties, and its difficulties—and in forming, and praying for a blessing upon, her serious purpose—to devote her life and heart to the man to whom the ties of religion and society were about to bind her.

She slept little that night, but might have been heard walking up and down her room, and once visiting that of her mother. By that sacred bedside again had she kneeled, commending her innocent heart and her earnest purposes to God.

The more she considered her own and her father's situation, the more she had been confirmed in the conviction that she had done right; and her conscience whispered her that, sooner or later, in spite of the misgivings of her faltering heart, consolation and peace would be hers.

She had been much with her father during the day. He was in a more querulous, uncomfortable state than ever; the presence of Sir Herbert in the house irritated him; he could not be made to understand why he was there. She had been a patient listener to the wearisome repetition of complaint upon complaint; and, at last, thinking the opportunity favourable, she had said,—

"Dear papa, don't you think a little change would do you good? Suppose you, and I, and Biggs, were to set out to-morrow, and try what change of scene would do."

"Well, I don't know, Emilia. At least, I should get out of the way of your tiresome uncle. I should not hear that loud step of his sounding through the gallery, and see him through the window, walking about as if he was master of this house and land, instead of me!"

She sighed and kissed him.

"Well, then, dear papa, it would do *me* good, perhaps, to set out to-morrow; so, if you will give me leave, I will order Biggs to pack up a few things for you."

"Well, I think you may as well. Shall we take the sociable?—but, though the sun shines to-day, it's perhaps too cold for that—let us have the chariot—your poor mother's chariot."

"Why, I think, my dear papa, the best way will be to have a chaise for you and Biggs together; and, as Mr. Danby is going our way, I will go in his chaise, and then, you know, you won't be crowded, which you always dislike very much."

To this plan he had consented; so she was relieved from one apprehension—the horror of a scene when he was to be removed; and this had enabled her to turn her thoughts undisturbed to those contemplations and reflections with which she had endeavoured to calm her mind.

Good Simpson had, with her own hands, prepared the wedding-dress; and when she came into the room in the morning, she found her young mistress fast asleep. Exhausted, and yet tranquillised, this good and pious young creature had sought her pillow; and slumber and dreams, composing and consoling as those which visited the first unhappy woman about to be driven, by her own frailty, from Paradise—how were they granted to her—this innocent victim of the follies and vices of others!

Her pale cheek, a little flushed, was resting on her pillow; her dark eyelashes shading her cheek; her hair, in all its lovely profusion, had fallen round her face. Simpson stood to gaze on the beautiful picture of repose, and the tears coursed one another down the good creature's cheeks.

The whole affair of the marriage had been a painful mystery

to Simpson, who thought she had understood her young mistress's feelings well before; and it was with a heavy heart she had sat preparing the bridal-dress—much as if she had been arranging the last earthly garments of which her charge would ever have need.

There she stood watching the slumberer—the long, white dress hanging over her arm.

At last the clock struck, and Simpson, bending tenderly over her, whispered,—

“Miss Emilia, it is time to rise.”

You should have seen that lovely, startled gaze, as the eyelids suddenly opened—the rosy colour—the wondering glance round—before she recollected where she was, or what was before her.

A few seconds sufficed to recall her from the sweet land of dreams in which she had been wandering. She glanced her eye to the white dress hanging upon Simpson's arm, and sighed.

“It is time to get up, Miss Emilia—it is seven o'clock.”

Not the pause of a moment—not an instant's hesitation. With the courage of some victim summoned to the scaffold or to the stake, she rose, and, with a composure that imposed a similar restraint upon her attendant, dressed herself in her bridal robes.

That done, she took what breakfast she could swallow, and then, without speaking, went down to her father.

He was not asleep when she entered his room, but was lying with more composure in his appearance than usual, and his eye, as at such moments, more rational and select.

“My dear,” he said, almost in his natural tone of voice, “you are in my room very early this morning—and in your white dress. Come and kiss me, child.”

She stooped down, and he kissed her fondly.

He took hold of her soft muslin sleeve, and looked wistfully at it.

“Your white dress—can it—is it possible?”

“Alas! alas! dear, dear papa! do not indulge in such a thought. No, I am engaged in a very difficult and painful business. We are to quit the Oaks to-day, you know. I had a great wish to have your blessing on what I was about to undertake. Will you give it to me, my beloved father?” and she knelt down by his bedside.

“The All-merciful bless and keep my child now, and in all she undertakes!” said he, with solemnity. “The Father of all bless my good and pious child!”

She was inexpressibly comforted. To hear him speak thus on this occasion, when her heart had yearned for the encouragement of such a blessing, strengthened her inexpressibly. She rose from her knees, kissed him twice, and, not trusting herself with one word more, left the room.

It was a still, calm February morning, one of those mornings sweetest, perhaps, in the year, when the soft breath of spring first begins to stir, and a tender sunlight breaks through the leafless branches,—and the green buds of the woodbine are shedding their slight tints over the woods,—and the birds, cheerful but quiet, are beginning to rouse from their long wintry night, and to speak again of love and joy !

The mild sweetness of the hour assisted to tranquillise her spirits. There was a peace within at which she marvelled herself, and which shed a heavenly composure round her countenance and gestures, and gave a sweet tranquillity to her melodious voice, that well entitled her to personify that angel which the good Susan had pictured to herself.

And well might it require a pen more faithful than mine to paint the ecstacy of Mr. Danby's feelings, when, summoned by her uncle, she came down into the hall to enter his carriage, which was to convey her to church. She looked to him like a seraph, her white robes flowing round her ; and the grave composure, yet gentleness, with which she returned his hurried and impassioned greeting excited in him, though he had no sweet poetic words or fancies with which to clothe them—ideas such as Romeo describes on the appearance of his Juliet, who was to him

“Glorious—as were a winged messenger of heaven.”

They stood together before the altar.

There was one who had been roaming round that small church-yard, who was thrown on the earth upon a green grave, hidden by some thick bushes from observation—there was one lying there in an agony of despair and sorrow which mocks description—it was Johnny Wilcox !

She, meantime, stood before that holy altar—her heart filled with awful and reverent feeling—completing the great sacrifice on which she had resolved.

But as the vows were finally exchanged—as she felt the ring suddenly surround her finger—at once, all her strength and courage gave way—she sank on her knees, covering her face with her hands—suffocated—trembling—her heart dying within her—nature failed, and she had fainted !

His distress was indescribable, as, for the first time catching his dear-bought treasure in his arms, he took her up breathless and insensible—her wan cheek faded as the withered lily—her lovely form and long, fair arms all hanging lifeless and helpless as a corse.

Even Sir Herbert was very much shocked and affected ; and, for the first time, conscience whispered him, and began to question what he had done.

Mr. Danby, his knees trembling so that he could scarcely stand, his face almost as pale as her own, had, in the mean time, lifted her in his arms and carried her for air to the church door ; and then came up a figure, wild-looking, with hair and

dress all dishevelled and in disorder, who gazed upon her with a look of agony indescribable, as there, in her husband's arms, she lay, and with a cry as if his heart had broken, rushed away and was gone.

He had one knee upon the ground; he was supporting her upon his arm; her head resting upon his bosom. Simpson was bathing her temples with water; her eyes opened—fell upon his, which were gazing in intense anxiety into hers. A look—a slight shudder passed over her frame!

Unhappy man!

The excessive pain that might be read in his countenance roused her to her recollection—to all her purposes of duty and kindness.

"I shall soon be better," she said, endeavouring at a faint smile. But it was such a smile!

He turned his head away and groaned. That groan recalled her entirely to herself—recalled her to all that gentle pity which was so natural to her good heart.

She lifted up her head, and, by Simpson's assistance, rose from the ground, saying,—

"Pray don't be uneasy about me, Mr. Danby. You are so kind—I have been imprudent. This parting from the Oaks! But I shall be better—I *am* better. Pray don't be uneasy upon my account, Mr. Danby."

He turned round, with a look! It brought the ready tears into her eyes.

Her only answer was to place her arm confidently within his—he pressed it to his bosom, and thus they reached the chaise which stood ready to receive them. The other, already occupied by her father and Biggs, was behind it.

The drivers mounted, the horses started; and thus Mr. Wyndham and his hapless daughter quitted the Oaks.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Erloschen sind die heitern Sonnen,
Die meiner Jugend Pfad erhellt;

* * *

Der rauhen Wirklichkeit zum Raube,
Was einst so schön, so göttlich war.—SCHILLER.

THE fire was blazing bright in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square; two candles were upon the chimney-piece; two more upon the table, which was spread out in the middle of the room, and covered with the wedding-supper—a wedding-supper which did infinite credit to Susan's accomplishments as a cook, who, upon this occasion, had screwed up all that *savoir-faire* in the culinary art which every good servant of the olden time possessed, whenever she thought proper to use it.

Mrs. Danby had submitted to all Susan's arrangements from the mere impossibility of doing otherwise; for Susan, who was provider-general for the mansion, laid about her and laid in

with a profusion, as she thought herself, which nothing but the importance of the occasion could justify.

She had dressed her mistress in her best black gown, and issued her commands for a new cap; and she herself, in the first new dress which she had purchased for years, with her new cap and scarlet and black ribbons on her head, stood in all the gaunt perpendicularity of her stalwart form at the window, watching every carriage that came down the street.

She really began to think they never would come.

Her mistress, a good deal more anxious and a good deal more nervous than she intended to be, and much more than she was resolved to let appear, sat, meanwhile, in the accustomed chair, her hands and arms crossed before her, but every now and then casting her sharp black eye round the apartment, and starting, in spite of herself, when a carriage rattled down the street.

At last two chaises, whose speed and genuine rattle could not be mistaken, were heard approaching. The noise neared, and they stopped at the door.

Susan was already standing there as the girl opened it, and, with arms extended and face all flushed with joy and agitation, prepared to receive them.

Mr. Danby got out first, and then offered his hand to his young wife, who, covered from head to foot with a large black pelisse, and with a deep mourning bonnet of crape upon her head, slowly and with difficulty descended from the carriage, and showed her pale and colourless face to the astonished and disappointed Susan.

"It was like a corpse and not a bride coming into the house," as she said afterwards; "and I knew no good would come of it."

With lips white and trembling, the young Mrs. Danby endeavoured to speak, while with anxious hurry in every gesture, Mr. Danby, far from answering Susan's hasty welcomes, kept saying,—

"She is not well; the journey has been too much for her. Is my mother up stairs? Let us get her up stairs."

The shaking of the uneasy vehicle, to which she had been so little accustomed—the length of the day's journey—the hurry of the preceding morning—and the agitation of the arrival—had indeed, for the moment, quite overpowered her. Her strength had been diminished more than she was herself aware of by the sufferings she had undergone since her mother's death. She felt really ill—and so ill that she could scarcely articulate.

But she was not in the least the less alive to anxiety on her father's account, and desirous herself to receive, support, and soothe him, under the agitation of first entering his new home.

She looked up in the face of Susan, which, in spite of its expression of blank disappointment, seemed like that of a friend, and, taking hold of her arm of iron to support herself—for indeed she could scarcely stand—said,—

"I am only a little dizzy with the hurry of the journey and the sudden light. Let me first take care of my father."

"Sit down, then, miss," said Susan, "on that chair, and we'll get the old gentleman out first."

While Emilia sat down to recover herself, and Mr. Danby stood helpless and uncomfortable by her side, the ready Susan had, assisted by Biggs, got Mr. Wyndham out of the chaise, and, bringing him up the steps, had led him, confounded with amazement, into the house.

He was excessively exhausted, excessively tired—indeed, quite ill—and his mind for the moment so completely disordered, that he would listen to no representations of Biggs, but was perfectly unmanageable.

The only thing was to get him immediately to bed; and Emilia, having recovered herself a little, assisted him up stairs, and, lighted by Susan, entered the little apartment which was in future to be his.

His daughter cast round her a look of dismay. The room was so small that with difficulty could two beds stand in it; the floor was bare, except just in the centre, where was a small piece of ordinary carpeting; the dressing-table unfurnished but by one small swing-glass; a triangular washing-stand in a corner, and two chairs. Such was the contrast to Mr. Wyndham's elegantly-furnished dressing-room, fitted up with every luxurious appendage to the toilet which the most extravagant fancy could devise—airy, lofty, light, and beautiful; and this little dungeon was what she had purchased for him with her life!

Fortunately he was just now so excessively exhausted, that he was incapable of taking much notice of anything.

She waited by his side, comforted and caressed him, and performed all the numerous kind offices of affection with such gentle earnestness, that Susan was beginning already to forget her disappointment, and to think her the best and sweetest creature she had ever seen.

Nothing could have been more serviceable to Emilia than this occupation; and when, finding that her father would now suffer himself to be undressed and put to bed, she turned away to leave the room, she felt again strengthened and supported in a manner that astonished herself.

She was attended by Susan, who opened the door of the sitting-room. Her husband, who was sitting with his mother, started from his chair, and, taking her hand, led her forward into the full blaze of fire and candle, and presented her to the terrible-looking old lady, already pretty considerably offended that the young lady had gone to put her father to bed before she paid duty to herself.

"My mother, Emilia—Emilia, your husband's mother," said Mr. Danby, with some solemnity.

The young lady bent on one knee, with the sweetest humility, and pressed her lip upon the old lady's hand, who, with a grunt and an embarrassed and discomfited air, received this act of

graceful and unexpected homage from the fair creature, whose every look and gesture proclaimed her immense superiority.

That proud and envious old woman could not endure this; and her unreasonable dislike was immediately increased by the unaffected grace, the simple dignity, of the being she had made a resolution, in her own vulgar and bad phrase, "to keep under."

Her coldness shocked and astonished Emilia, but was scarcely perceived by Mr. Danby, who, lost in admiration at this unexpected act of reverence, found his poor heart again distracted with a love amounting to adoration, and a sense of hopeless discouragement akin to despair.

He forgot himself in gazing; and it was Susan, who, seeing the old lady so ill performing the honours of her house, came up and broke up the somewhat awkward scene by saying, with much ceremony and much respect,—

"Young Mrs. Danby"—Emilia started and coloured—"will you please for to take off your great, heavy pelisse, and your black bonnet, and come and have some supper?"

Emilia answered by disencumbering herself of her cloak and bonnet, and displaying her beautiful figure and hair to the eyes of Susan, who every moment was becoming more captivated by, and interested in, her young master's bride.

Then Mrs. Danby, senior, rose majestically from her chair, and put herself at the head of her table, telling her son to take the other end, and signing to her daughter-in-law to sit down, which she did, to a meal which not all the skill of Susan could render agreeable, under such circumstances.

Mr. Danby, depressed and unhappy, never thought of making the least exertion to reassure his bride, or to soothe his mother into good-humour. He swallowed his scanty supper in profound silence, and sighed frequently; while his gloomy looks and Emilia's pale and faded cheeks only added to the ill-humour of the old lady.

She had hated her from the first, as the cause of seducing her son into marriage, and into so unprofitable a marriage; and, as she now scanned her with her sharp and jaundiced eye, she translated her delicacy into helplessness, her elegance into insolence and inaptitude, for homely and useful exertion. She was dissatisfied with all that she saw, and would have been with whatever she had seen; and her increasing aversion was in no small degree enhanced by the mortification of feeling somewhat self-abased, somewhat awed and quelled, in spite of every effort to the contrary, by the effect of Emilia's unaffected superiority and elegant manner and appearance.

To see her son look so unhappy, she thought also excessively provoking; but I doubt whether, if he had looked as happy as a king, she would have been in the least better pleased.

Emilia, sick, and faint, and weary as she was, made unspeakable efforts to appear cheerful; but the deep depression, the misery which fatigue and the slight fever of exhaustion now

rendered almost unendurable, were not to be concealed; and as her husband from time to time cast his anxious and irresolute eye upon her countenance, his own discomfort was every moment increasing.

Such was her first evening at home.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It is my nature's plague
To spy into abuse; and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not.—SHAKESPEARE.

"THAT'S it," said the mother, in an irritated voice— "that's it, but you wouldn't mind me."

She and her son were sitting in her small, close, unwholesome, and darksome lodging, up two pair of stairs, the next house but one to his own.

Here she had retired, and here she nursed her ill-humour; for, though pretty indifferent to the comforts and elegancies of life, she felt the banishment, as she called it, from her own house as a great injury, though her son repeatedly entreated her to return, and said that he would find himself a place elsewhere. Indeed, he began to think he should like to have his wife in Chancery Lane, much closer to his own chambers than the house she at present occupied. But this by-the-bye.

"That's it! but you must be such a fool! You come and ask me what you must do, and what's the matter with her, and I tell you what's the matter with her—she *hates* you!"

He shook his head bitterly.

"How could you suppose that such a fine young lady as that could marry an old man like *you* for anything but your money? Pooh!"

And she looked contemptuously.

"How could you be so weak?"

"If I could have thought," he began,— "if she had given me any reason to think——"

"Pooh, pooh! She hadn't a penny, and she wanted to marry you; and what cares she?"

He was silent. He sat, his knees crossed, his head bent down, in bitter rumination.

Ah, Mr. Danby! if, instead of indulging these wounded feelings—if, instead of suffering your thoughts to be engrossed between a passion that want of self-discipline had rendered uncontrollable, and a sort of resentful despair at the languor and depression which, in spite of her unparalleled efforts, was gaining upon her—had you but, like a good and well-principled husband and man—had you but set yourself seriously to make this young creature, whom you had vowed to protect and bless—to make her happy!

Had you endeavoured to win her confidence by your confidence—to cheer her spirits by your indulgence—to remember what she had been, and what she was—all she had lost, and

what she had received in return! Had you thought of her dreary life—taken from the sweet fields and groves, the skies and suns she loved, and buried in a dark, dull street, without companions, object, or amusement, secluded from all but yourself, your mother, and her unhappy and incapacitated father—had you but been accustomed to reflect, to reflect upon the claims and necessities of others—had you but been what, as a Christian husband, you ought to have been,—who can estimate the progress you might already have made in a heart so grateful and affectionate!

She, upon her side, did her best.

She *had* reflected, and reflected well, upon her situation, its difficulties and its duties. She had not forgotten your claims, nor had the consideration escaped her that it was not by yielding to her own griefs, instincts, wishes, or feelings, that she could make one in every respect so different from herself happy. Her prayer of every morning was to fulfil her part by you—the examination of every night, whether she had well performed it.

How gentle was the smile with which she received you, when, exhausted by toil and depressed with your own reflections, you returned to your home! How bright the fire burning upon the hearth, the slippers and chair already prepared to receive you, the little tea-equipage and the hissing urn! Was your tenderness ever repulsed—the least word or accent of kindness thrown away?

What though her cheek was pale—her gesture grave and quiet? Was that to be carried as a reproach to her? That her efforts were above the unassisted strength of either body or mind—when no one had the tenderness or humanity to endeavour to assist her—was that to be carried to her as a reproach?

Some men in Mr. Danby's situation seem quite lost in unmeaning fondness and weak indulgence, and thus attempt to win the heart they only spoil. He was too manly and too sensible for that: the husband assumed the lover's place, and the embarrassment and sense of inferiority were *at* an end. But why did he not temper the grave dignity of the conjugal relation with that kindness, that care, that consideration, which can alone sweeten and enhance the tie?

Alas for his pride! Had he not allowed pride—the pride of ill-requited passion—to embitter his feelings, to render him less just, less tender, less confiding, less indulgent, to this young creature, because she was the object of his secret and excessive idolatry—had he been reasonable, benevolent, well-principled, and good, as she was, he might even yet have made her happy, and, through her, himself exquisitely happy.

I pity and lament over him, as I am too often called upon to pity and lament over the treasures of felicity annihilated every day under this neglect of the feeling of others—this absorption in our own—this want of a serious regard to justice and kindness amid the vexations and contradictions of domestic life.

But another inexcusable fault against her he, in his want of reflection, committed: he suffered his mother to get possession of his ear, and listened to her irritating and injurious representations; he allowed himself to overlook the daily acts of duty and observance which it was Emilia's unceasing study to pay; he allowed his mother to repeat that she hated him; and, in a kind of bitter despair and intense disappointment, he endeavoured to wean his own affections from her in return. But in this he could not succeed—he still loved her passionately.

Little, however, was she the gainer by this: his indifference would have been almost better; for the irritation and ill-humour which he as little endeavoured to correct as he did any other of his faults, and which arose from his wounded feelings, often added positive pain to that dearth of all natural enjoyment under which she was perishing.

At length a most unfortunate accident aggravated, if aggravation were possible, the unfortunate circumstances of her situation. She had been sitting with her writing-desk open before her one evening, employed in regulating some of her domestic affairs, when he came in to tea from his chambers, bringing, as he often did, the newspaper of the day in his hand.

He was not in a very good humour, which she perceiving—after rising, as she always did, to take off his greatcoat, to put his chair to the fire, and perform all the little offices of affectionate reception—sat down again to her writing.

She put her desk upon a small table by her side, for the maid came in with tea; and, as she was preparing it, contrary to her usual wont, instead of endeavouring to amuse and entertain him by talking to him, she kept turning from time to time on one side, and continuing her writing and calculations.

He was vexed and disappointed at this, but, according to his usual custom, said nothing. He wanted her to propose to read the newspaper to him, but he was too cross to ask her to do that which she would have so cheerfully performed; and she, occupied with what she was about, did not think of it.

At last he said, in a dissatisfied tone, holding the candle before the paper,—

“I grow quite an old man; I cannot see this small print; I must get spectacles.”

She turned round at this, and said,—

“Let me read the newspaper to you.”

“Well, I wish you would,” said he, “for I want to hear the news from Spain; there has been a great battle.”

And he handed her the newspaper.

With lips white as the napkin on her lap, and hands trembling with eagerness and agitation, she took the paper from him, did not attempt to read, but glanced hastily over the pages.

There was the list of the killed and wounded. Her eye, with a sort of wild hurry, ran over it; she gave a loud shout rather than shriek, dropped the paper from her hand, and fainted dead away.

She fell against the little table, upset it and her writing-desk, and lay prostrate upon the floor amid scattered fragments, her forehead, which had been cut with the broken inkstand, all streaming with blood.

He rang the bell till it broke, and flew to raise her from the ground; she lay again, as he once before had beheld her, quite inanimate in his arms.

But this time the fit was more serious—this time the pulse of life was all but extinguished. The women servants, aroused by the summons, came about her; and Susan, who happened to be below, assisted by Mr. Danby, carried her up to bed.

There she lay long insensible, while Susan exhausted all her remedies to recover her; she came to herself, however, at last. But though Mr. Danby hung over her with a return of all his former tenderness, she did not meet his eye with her soft, accustomed smile.

Her eye seemed glazed in despair—she neither looked at nor seemed to notice him, till suddenly melted, as it were, by some new thought, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, and burst into an uncontrollable passion of tears.

She had never been seen to weep so before. She wept like one utterly abandoned to grief—such floods, such a rain of tears, sobs so bitter, never surely before had burst from human heart.

She did not seem at present sufficiently mistress of her recollection to attempt to restrain herself; she was, it was evident, perfectly mastered by her sorrow.

Mr. Danby, equally shocked, astonished, and embarrassed at this paroxysm, stood gazing passively upon her, while Susan was employed in stanching the blood which flowed from the wound upon her forehead.

Suddenly the cause flashed upon his mind.

The list in the newspaper!

He stooped down his head, and said, compassionately,—

“There was some name in that list, my dear, which you recognised; be comforted, Emilia, it is the fortune of war.”

And he took her hand, and would have kissed it.

But she withdrew it, and, clasping them together, wrung them bitterly; the bed shook with her agony.

Instead of pitying again, he turned away hurt and disappointed; the effort, and it had been a great effort, which he had made to conquer his natural awkwardness and shyness—that shyness and embarrassment which characters such as his invariably feel in the presence of great emotion—had not met with the return he expected.

She seemed almost to reject comfort from him.

He had not the benevolent patience to persevere.

Wounded in his too susceptible feelings, he drew back, turned away, and walked slowly out of the room.

He left her to the bitterness of her solitary anguish, because that bitterness had, for the first time during their mutual connexion, made her impatient, perhaps unkind.

It was but too true—*his* name was among the dead.

The sudden, unprepared blow had burst asunder, as it were at once, all the imperfectly healed wounds of her heart; for the moment she was inconsolable.

“Oh, how bitterly did that tender heart clamour forth its loud remorse and regrets at her involuntary inconstancy! How trivial now appeared every evil upon earth, through weak fear of which she had forsaken him! How should she ever know when, and where, and with what feelings he had died!

Mr. Danby gone, she felt abandoned by all the world. It is true she had at the moment rejected his consolation; but her poor heart was yearning for some bosom on which to weep—even *his*!

Good, honest Susan stood by her alone, very kindly bathing and stanching her wound.

She was affected beyond measure at the scene she witnessed, and Mr. Danby's speech suggested to her the cause. All had, more or less, in those days of carnage, been called upon to witness the desolation produced in thousands of hearts by the fatal lists of killed and wounded.

She stooped down to her, and said, like a kind nurse to a child, in an agony of despair,—

“Never mind—never mind young master, miss. He's hurt, like—he can't bear to see you cry—for anything but him. But cry away—cry, poor love—it will do you good. Maybe it's a brother or a cousin, like, that's gone in these awful battles. Come, cry.”

And taking the poor young creature into her rough, honest arms, she pressed her to her bosom.

It should have been *your* bosom, Mr. Danby.

Emilia threw her arms round the good Susan's neck, and sobbed like a child.

But her anguish was already softened. One kind, sympathising heart on which to weep—her affectionate temper was soothed even by this.

She was weak—she was soon overpowered; and, like a child under the influence of this first return of sweet and natural feeling, so long withheld, she sobbed and cried herself asleep in Susan's arms, who, pressing her to her bosom, rocked her like a baby.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

But jealous souls will not be answered so;
They are not ever jealous for a cause,
But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself.—SHAKESPEARE.

IN the mean time, Mr. Danby, hurt, discouraged, wretched, at witnessing her wretchedness, and inexpressibly mortified at what he thought the rejection of his efforts to console her, had slowly walked down stairs and re-entered the sitting-room.

Here he found his mother.

She had heard of her daughter-in-law's illness, and always officious, and with that love of governing all things which led

her to interfere, whether welcome or not, upon every occasion had already entered the house.

Emilia had, however, at the expense of much effort, and much displeasure and ill-will, manifested in no very measured terms, succeeded in establishing her own bed-room, at least, as sacred from intrusion. So the old gentlewoman did not quite like to venture there without her son's permission and authority. Seeing the room all in confusion, the desk broken, the ink streaming over the floor, and the carpet littered with papers, she had employed herself in washing out the stains and gathering the fragments, and was endeavouring to arrange them in their proper places—for her instinct was true for others as for herself, in everything that was connected with saving—when her son re-entered the room.

"Well, what's the matter now?" said she, lifting up her head.

"I don't exactly know," he replied, in a hurried and uncomfortable tone; "she was reading the newspaper, or going to read it to me as usual, when something seemed to strike her eye, she gave a loud scream, and fainted on the floor."

"Overthrowing everything, and making all this mess. But these fine ladies, in their fits, have seldom thought for anything but themselves, though they usually take care to fall *easy*. Well, all this is news to me. I never had a fit in my life. I didn't use to trouble my husband with my hysterics and fancies when I had them. I kept them down, and if I hadn't, he'd have made me keep 'em down; but we've had such fine breeding, forsooth! Why, Matthew, you look as pale as if something *really* had happened."

He seemed to pay no attention to what she was saying. He was turning over the pages of the newspaper hastily, and poring over it, as well as he could, by the light of the unsnuffed candle.

"How you do use those eyes of yours!" said his mother, snuffing the candle and pushing it to him.

He took it up, and began to spell over the fatal list.

"Brigadier-General Hervey—wounded slightly.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Burgess, — Regiment of Infantry—wounded severely.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence, — Regiment of Heavy Dragoons—wounded severely.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Lenox, — Regiment of Lancers—killed," &c. &c.

Lenox!—he recollected the name. He returned to it, and read it over again.

Lenox!—yes, he had certainly heard that name before. Then he went back to the dinner-party on his first visit to the Oaks—to the young gentlemen—to one young gentleman who was walking beside her upon the terrace when first he saw her—fair, erect, and blooming—coming forward, smiling and prattling, and her gipsy hat hanging on her arm.

He had never once thought of him before—he saw him plain

enough now. The whole scene, bright and vivid as it in actual presence, rose to his fancy, and he understood, for the first time, his own story.

He was thrown back in his chair, the newspaper in one drooping hand, the other covering his eyes, lost in thought, when his mother laid her hand upon his shoulder.

He started from his reverie, as if awakened from a deep sleep, and looked hastily and bewildered at her.

She had a small paper in her hand, and she held it before his eyes with a look of malicious satisfaction, that she did not seem even to condescend to disguise.

In the other hand, there were three or four other papers of different shapes and sizes, but none of them folded.

"Your wife writes verses, it seems. Wouldn't you like to steal a look at some?"

He took the paper, scarcely knowing what he did, and began to read it. He coloured crimson as he read.

"There are more of them," said the mother, handing the rest to him; "oh, pray read them all!"

He read them all.

They were the verses I have told you of, and which I would not suffer *you* to read, or rather leave unread, in your indifference.

He was not like what I suspected of you.

He devoured every word—he read them twice—the deep crimson of his cheek, the dark expression of his brow, the swelling of his heaving chest, showed with what effect.

But he disappointed his mother—he did not utter one word of exclamation; but, rising from his chair, took up a sheet of writing-paper, folded the verses in it; then went to the desk, examined it, found that its fragments could be fastened together by the mere use of a little compression, returned the folded papers to the double-drawer in which they had lain quite forgotten by her, locked the desk, put the key into his pocket, went back to his chair, sat down, and, covering his eyes again with his hand, resumed his former attitude.

It was strange! In all his ruminations upon her, in all those secret regrets and disappointments which, in the solitude of his own soul, he had indulged—the thought of a prior attachment had never once crossed his mind—the agonies of jealousy he had, till then, been spared.

The relentless tooth of this raging demon now fastened on his heart with an intensity which you are, by this time, sufficiently acquainted with his character to appreciate.

Shakspeare, when he chose a victim of that fatal passion for one of the masterpieces of his masterly tragedies, knew well what he did when he linked the lovely, snow-white Desdemona—the delicate, the elegant, the refined—with the dark, unpolished, but most honest-hearted Moor. It was the secret worship of that ideal beauty, united to the secret distrust of his own power of pleasing, which made the brave soldier the easy victim of the insidious Ancient. So it was with the unhappy

Mr. Danby. The self-distrust, which grew with that idolatrous admiration which he in secret cherished for his fair and charming Emilia, had already occasioned the reserve and distrust which had so greatly impaired the happiness of both. The idea of a rival!—of that handsome young man in the bloom of youth, whom he now recollected but too well—plunged him at once into the sea of restless jealousy, under the agitation of which he did not know whether he hated himself, Colonel Lenox, or his hapless Emilia most.

Alas for the distrusting hate which grows out of such love!—and alas for his fatal resolution to bury the secret in his own bosom, and never to mention the subject to her!

Did you ever read the works of John Wesley?

If you have not, you have, perhaps, omitted to read the most remarkable exhibition of genius—the most extraordinary display of that wisdom which arises from the knowledge of the human heart, and, with one or two exceptions, the result of some of his peculiar doctrines—the most remarkable instance of moderation and sound good sense—by which I mean that good sense which assigns the limit at which virtue degenerates into vice, and self-sacrifice into error—which has ever been printed.

This sensible man, among other things, has left us a sermon upon the well-known text—"If thy brother hath aught against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone;" and has pointed out the wisdom and the necessity of the divine commandment in a manner which made me, for one, more sensible than ever I was before of the bounden duty of not allowing a secret grief against any one to lie festering at the heart.

Upon the wisdom and justice of a free and open explanation of our grievances to the person from whom the offence has arisen—in soft and gentle terms, you may be sure—does this master of his own temper, this pattern of Christian gentleness, insist; but what he enlarges on most forcibly is, the secret injury we ourselves inflict upon another by carrying the feeling of injury undisclosed within us—neither offering the opportunity to explain away that which may be mistaken—to excuse that which was inadvertent—or to apologize for that which was wrong. Moreover, he enlarges upon that disposition of the human mind which leads us to aggravate to our own imagination what we reserve for the food of solitary musings; and, as I have expressed above, leave a wound to fester and gangrene for want of air and light and the proper remedies. But I refer you to the sermon.

Now, had Mr. Danby possessed this Christian principle—had he—instead of nursing his sense of injury in proud resentment—had he confessed the wound his confidence and affection had received—had he opened his heart, and given his complaints, even his reproaches, words—what infinite unhappiness might he have spared to himself and his Emilia! The very confidence—the confession of his weakness, thus rendered right and necessary; the picture of what he had undergone—the re-

velation of her secret sufferings and struggles—would have done more under the circumstances to endear them to each other than anything which could have happened. Two hearts so really good could *not* have been unreservedly displayed to each other without finding causes without end for new sympathy.

But Mr. Danby, you may be sure, had never read a sermon in his life, and very probably had never once read the Gospel through.

His disposition was naturally reserved; his temper proud under all its depression and humility; and I have told you, till you are tired of hearing it, that self-correction was an idea that really never crossed his mind.

He was about to taste the bitter fruits of its neglect.

Alas! and alas again! that in this world so many innocents must suffer, to expiate, as it were, the faults and mistakes of others!

John Wesley, in this sermon I am talking about, goes on to say, that at least, if we have not the resolution to mention to people our dissatisfactions against them, we ought not to indulge ourselves in opening our hearts upon the subject to others. If we will not have recourse to the legitimate method of relief, we are at least to deny ourselves all illegitimate ones. We are not to complain to the rest of the world, if we will not complain to the offender himself.

Mr. Danby was not likely to offend against this last injunction: he had many natural virtues, and this was one of them—it is indeed one of the manly, and I heartily wish it to be enrolled among the female virtues—he never complained of people. Even to his mother, he never mentioned or even alluded to the subject more.

And if she, by her hints and inuendoes, showed that she was about to approach it, he took care to let her know, as you are aware he could do sometimes, that this was a matter upon which he would not allow her to enter. The susceptibility of the wound, the exquisite pain which the slightest touch occasioned, would in this case have made a necessity of the virtue he practised.

But the canker lay within, withering the habitual exchange of social good offices, and giving a false colour to every action on her side, till a coldness insensibly stole over their relations which had never been felt before, and which cast a still deeper shadow over her life.

He soon relapsed into his ancient habits, and becoming again absorbed in mere technical business, was almost as much in his chambers as before he became a married man; and she in her small house in Chancery Lane—for to that place they had removed—excluded from all that could give animation or colour to life, without children to enliven her dull and dreary home—without the slightest means of dissipating thought by the gratification of her fine taste for art and natural beauty—added weary day to weary day till the sum of them astonished herself.

The following passages are extracts from a sort of little thought-book kept by Emilia, and were entered at very different periods of time:—

"Alas! alas! how my heart sickens after the Oaks! It is to be sold, I see, upon the 14th, and I shall never see it again. That wild and beautiful place; those lawns and shrubberies; those fields with their huge high hedges, where I have played while the haymakers were busy at their work! That dark wood—many and many a time have I shuddered at it, when it was swaying under a high wind, the rooks cawing wildly above;—the dear terrace! where I and that loved mother sat, and where she used to give those anxious warnings! Ah! did she divine my fate?"

"Who will follow us there? Will others, gay and happy as I once was, play among those woods, making them ring with the merry laugh of childhood? Will some one other girl, young and ardent as I was then, throw herself upon the grass among those daisies on a warm, blue, sunshiny day, when the grasshopper chirrups, and the birds are still—thanking God that she was born to such a world? And will that other, perhaps, end like me?"

"This town—this huge wilderness of narrow and blackened streets—these crowds of strange and ugly unknown faces, that glare upon me like spectres in a dream, and with whom no kind communion is held, no more than if they actually were fantastic and hideous shadows—how oppressive and desolate it is all to me! It is a prison—a huge, darksome prison, in which I feel myself immured—immured in walls far more really imprisoning me than walls of stone or iron. The spirit, at least, there is free; in thought the soul escapes, and is at large; but even in thought I must not seek liberty.

"Ah! who but He who formed the heart knows what that heart can suffer! What restless wishes, what longings after happiness! what moments of rapture, or what deep despair! Alas! I have felt it all. Am I better or worse for what I have endured? Alas for those ardent aspirations! those earnest endeavours after good! that gay disregard of evil! My cheerful, stirring nature—gone, with that sun of happiness which shone upon and warmed me.

"Resignation, and a peace which does at times pass the understanding, are in their place. More consideration, more prudence, more gentleness—but am I better? Or is the very growth of these more tranquil qualities but a proof that my character is blighted and my energy decayed?"

"It may be as this writer says, and yet I think he is hardly right. I *must* think that the great Ruler has so ordered it, that the lines of our happiness and of our duty should run one way.

"What make the happiness of one, ought not necessarily to form the unhappiness of another—his thoughts on marriage too! I cannot think them just. Nay, they strike me, with all their apparent desire to increase the happiness of people, as both false and vicious.

"It must, I think, be for the general good, that people should be called upon to perform their duty, and not be taught to seek so much after their happiness; and that marriage should be the most holy, sacred, indissoluble of ties. It is true, *ennui*, languor, distaste of life—fatal evils—may steal at times upon those who keep within the limits of their duties; but can this author be sure they will never visit those who break them?"

"For me, I own it, it is too true. My life is all darkness; my best hopes and prospects are destroyed. I have been taken from the sunshine and sweet fresh breath of nature to be locked up in the worst imprisonment of artificial life; this dark and gloomy street into which I look, where no bright object visits my eye, where no soft gale ever breathes upon my cheek. What is it but a type of my moral life? Alas! if it be wrong to dwell upon such thoughts, may God forgive me! the relief of pouring out the lamentations of my soul for once may be allowed; for once I may own, my task is heavy and severe—but I am resolved.

"If virtue be a dream, religion but a fable, as this dangerous teacher would have me believe, then am I indeed a poor miserable victim to delusion. But I will *not* believe it—I will still cling to *Thee*. I will still hope in submitting patiently I am serving, as I best can, the good and wise Creator—one who watches even the sparrow fall; how much more then counts He the tears of His rational children! If it be for some of His purposes that I am here, will I not unrepiningly fulfil them? Oh! temper it to me, my Father—temper to me the wind, for I am in truth thy most shorn and desolate lamb!"

Such was the creature whom Mr. Danby, in the pride of ill-requested passion and the bitterness of concealed jealousy, cast away from his bosom.

And, after all, Colonel Lenox was not dead. By one of those errors in the returns which were not uncommon, and were perhaps unavoidable in those days of death, his name and that of the less fortunate Lawrence had been substituted for each other. Lenox was the one dangerously wounded; Lawrence was killed. Some months afterwards she discovered this in a newspaper, but I believe Mr. Danby never observed the paragraph.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I praise thee, matron! and thy due
Is praise: heroic praise, and true!
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent.—WORDSWORTH.

YEARS have now elapsed,

And we must return to Chancery Lane.

It is a fine May morning, and London is full, exulting, brilliant, and busy, as it is wont at that gay spring-time of the year to be.

The season, as the saying is, is an uncommonly good one.

Every house is occupied, not a room to be had; the carriages are flashing along the streets in one bright succession; servants in gay liveries hanging behind; horses in gay harness prancing along; ladies in all the colours of the rainbow lounging within. Gentlemen are caracolling on their beautiful steeds, and lounging at the windows of the fashionable clubs. The shops are overflowing with bright and beautiful objects, and with obsequious youths behind the counters, and capricious fine ladies before. The Park is in all its brownness, Kensington Gardens in all their greenness—both filled with the ceaseless succession; of gay and gaudy crowds. Music fills the air throughout the day: the dance, the song, the ball, the masque, at night.

Our London is in a world of ceaseless excitement, amusement, and gaiety.

The beggar and thief in his den is as miserable and vicious.

The dressmaker's *improver*, in her sickly back room, as hot, as nervous, and as tremulous.

The youths behind the counters spend the same unhealthy and sleepless nights, on mattresses under the counters of that room, still steaming with the poisoned air of the day.

The inhabitant of the close street—the busy wife—or the fading daughter—still pines for the Sunday's breath of air.

And Chancery Lane is still dark, and dull, and close, and dreary.

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart unwounded play;
For some must toil, while others sleep;
So runs the world away.

The sun shines, however, in this propitious season even upon Chancery Lane; and he is shining in an oppressive, rather than an exhilarating manner, upon the window of a small back room, in which three people are sitting at breakfast.

The rays of Phœbus, the glorious god of life and light, who awakens the sound of joy amid the fields of nature—gladdening the reviving earth with the hues and sweet perfumes of the infinite springing flowers, and filling the air with all the busy notes of birds, and lowing herds, and bleating lambs; youth—springing youth, in all its varied tones, rejoicing the heart on every side—fall, in Chancery Lane, upon a small but very neatly arranged table; and is expending his powerful beam in the degrading occupation of heating a milk-pot.

She will not have the blind pulled down—that pale and now sallow-looking lady who presides at the breakfast-table—because that old, childish, and somewhat peevish-looking man, is evidently amused by seeing the capricious beams flicker upon the tea-cups and glance upon the spoons. It is very hot, glaring, oppressive, and disagreeable to her; but she is not one of those who therefore *must* have the blind down.

Her husband, who is dressed in a most slovenly manner, and who never once speaks, or lifts up his head from the papers he is poring over, has had his chair so placed by her, that the sun does not beat upon his head.

She is pouring out his tea, sugaring and stirring it, with an attention a good deal wasted, for, in truth, he cares little for these things; and she has placed some very delicate-looking buttered crumpet before him, which he from time to time snatches at and devours, without looking up, and which she continues to supply as it is exhausted. She is, also, as time allows, giving her attention to the querulous and withered old man; for Mr. Wyndham, during these five years, has become *quite* an old man; and he is at this moment in all the irritation produced, as it is now almost daily produced, by the provocations of the old lady; who, alas! is still alive, but not at this moment in presence.

She *has* been there, however, that morning, and has, as usual, left the print of her footsteps in the path of life, leaving the said path, as some footsteps are sure to leave it, very much more rough and troublesome to get over than it was before.

The reasons which had led Emilia to acquiesce in, and even promote, the change from Charlotte Street to Chancery Lane were twofold.

She was wearied with the repetition of the old lady's incessant hints and complaints about having lost her house and gone into lodgings; enlivened with sundry not very delicate inuendoes, such as, that if some people had not married as some people had done, they need not have been obliged to any one for a house. All which, patiently as she bore such things, she could not help thinking very disagreeable.

Her second reason had been one which carried more importance in her eyes. Since her poor father had been well enough to leave his room, and to be allowed to circulate at his pleasure about the house, the old lady, who was perpetually running in, kept up an unceasing and irritating fight with him, the wearying nature of which you, who are aware in what a light she regarded him—namely, as a useless and troublesome burden, imposed, with the grossest injustice, upon the facility of her son—may perhaps be able to estimate.

To get out of the reach of these incessant visitations of the old lady, had been the aim of almost the only piece of generalship that Emilia had ever been known to attempt with her husband. When he slightly mentioned Chancery Lane, she had seized upon the idea; and had supported him in it, and carried her point, in defiance of Mrs. Danby's objections: in a manner, too, that might have taught her the power she possessed, had she ever cared to exert it.

The dowager's only consolation was, that the house in Chancery Lane was very considerably darker, and smaller, and closer, and duller, than the one in Charlotte Street. So that, though Emilia, in spite of all Mrs. Danby's orations against extravagance, accompanied by the usual allusions to her son's great losses, had done her best to improve its appearance by cheap papers and pretty chintzes, she found it quite impossible to make it look anything but very close, dark, and uncomfortable.

Of all which Mr. Danby was no more aware than if he had been blind. He liked to have his wife and his house near his chambers; she had assured him—and the assurance had given greater pleasure than he had tasted for a long time—that she liked it so too; he had never, according to his usual indifference to outward circumstances, adverted to the dulness and darkness of the house he chose; and thus he condemned his sweet flower to wither in a dungeon, simply from careless want of thought.

Mrs. Danby, going into the Strand to make some cheap purchase in Hungerford Market, dressed in her market-dress (a *very* rusty black pelisse and a bonnet of the last century), accompanied by Susan carrying her basket, had called in, as usual, in the hope of persuading her extravagant daughter-in-law to allow her to lay in the supplies; a matter which the reigning Mrs. Danby, if so she may be called, invariably resisted when the dowager was alone, and invariably consented to when Susan was in attendance.

"Well, Mrs. Matthew," the old lady had said—she always called her Mrs. Matthew, and would fain have all the world do the same, but the world would not—"well, Mrs. Matthew, it's just as usual; I stepped down to your larder before I came up—as empty as ever! What *can* your servants do with all the meat? I'll be bound you feed half the town! But it's no affair of mine; but I do believe that Jenny is as arrant a thief—"

Mrs. Matthew rarely took up the argument with her mother-in-law, but she did not like to have her innocent servants abused, so she said, quietly—

"I have made a pretty accurate calculation of what the consumption of such a family as Mr. Danby's ought to be, and I have no reason to think that Jenny exceeds it."

I must here put in a word for fear you should think Mrs. Matthew despised economy, and inform you that she had very conscientious views upon the subject, and thought the Christian mistress of a family was guilty of a great omission of duty, amounting to a sin, if she allowed any indolent extravagance or waste in herself, or permitted among her servants that careless profusion and idle luxury which is the parent with them of every sort of vice and profligacy.

She *did* make her calculations; and, like a clever and sensible woman, practised a system of order, and well-regulated and liberal economy, which made every one happy, and tended to make every one good, about her.

But this pen-and-ink housekeeping, as the dowager called it (I *will* call her the dowager because she called Emilia Mrs. Matthew, and if she does not behave better, I have a great mind to call her the *widow* Danby)—this pen-and-ink housekeeping was quite inconsistent with her prying, hole-and-corner proceedings; and because Mrs. Matthew listened with the most provoking indifference to the tale of what went out in the shape of broken crust and cold potato to the man who bought the wash for his pig, she chose to consider her as the most extravagant of housewives, who would assuredly end by bringing her hus-

band to the same pass as her father had come to; which unpardonable piece of rudeness she did not scruple to utter when she was vexed, and Emilia alone, though she never ventured upon it in the presence of Mr. Danby, absent and inattentive as that gentleman too often was.

"I suppose you won't want any fish to-day?" said the dowager, "as Mr. Danby dines in the city."

"Fish!" Mr. Wyndham had said in his childish voice, lifting up his head, and looking at Emilia, "I should so like a bit of fish!"

"You shall have it then, certainly, my dear father. Yes, madam, if you please. What fish would you like best, sir?"

"Why, I should like some smelts; I haven't tasted smelts, Emilia, this very long time. Do you remember how deliciously Sanders used to send them up at the Oaks?"

"Smelts!"

The dowager was speechless with indignation.

"Will you be so good, madam, or shall I ask Susan? Half a dozen will be quite as many as my father will require."

"Smelts indeed! Half a dozen as much as *your* father will require! I wonder when *his* father" (indicating her son with a gesture) "indulged himself in smelts? and I should think he had rather the better right."

"She's always so cross and ill-natured," said poor Mr. Wyndham, in a tone of lamentation: "she'll never let me have anything that's good. Will she, Emilia?"

"Hush, my dear sir!—hush, hush!" as to a child.

"I'm always cross and ill-natured! Am I, sir? Because I won't indulge—"

"What's all this about?" said Mr. Danby, lifting up his head, and looking sufficiently cross himself at being disturbed.

"Oh! nothing, nothing, sir," from Emilia; "a mere trifle; only about my poor father's dinner—"

"Let him have what he likes best for his dinner. What are you about, Emilia?" And he returned to his reading.

"You see he says I'm to have what I like for my dinner, and I choose smelts," said the poor old man, with childish triumph.

"Then you may get whom you will to buy them," was old Mrs. Danby's reply, as she quitted the room, leaving the old man half crying at his disappointment and at her unkindness, and Emilia affectionately soothing him with the promise that he should have his smelts.

Such were the scenes in which this lofty-minded creature was destined, as it seemed, to spend her life. She sighed, and thought of her mother's definition of true heroism.

Mr. Danby, who had seemed puzzled and perplexed with his papers, turning their leaves over, looking back, looking forward, and swallowing his breakfast without interrupting his examination, lifted up his head at last, and, folding up the pages, was just leaving the room, when he turned back, and said,—

"These papers put me in mind, Emilia, of what, in my hurry of business yesterday, I quite forgot to tell you: they concern an old friend of yours. I should not call her old, for she is the

most blooming and beautiful young creature I ever saw. Her husband is out of town, and it was necessary I should have the honour of an interview with her.

"As soon as I was presented, she gave a little shriek, and, running forward, seized me by both hands, and vowed we were old acquaintance. I am glad, my dear, I am not grown so old and worn out as to be quite unrecognizable. She made numerous inquiries after you in a breath, and made me promise you should call upon her; and I think you should: so you may as well go this morning."

Emilia's heart was now fluttering and beating with the first sensation of real pleasure that it might almost be said she had known for years.

With a smile of more animation than he had seen for many a day upon her face, she said,—

"But, my dear Mr. Danby, you have forgotten to tell me the beautiful young lady's name, or where she was to be found."

"Her name is Mrs. Glenlyon, and she lives in Upper Grosvenor Street, number —. Send to my chambers for the Red Book, for I protest I have forgotten the number."

"Glenlyon!" said Emilia; "but no other person but one could answer to the description; and was—"

"Miss Hesketh, daughter of Sir Thomas Hesketh," said he.

She clasped her hands with joyful delight. "And she remembered me?"

"Indeed she did, and seemed quite impatient to see you; and made me promise you should come, and come early, before she went out. Stay! let me recollect:—let me see—she said she was most likely to be alone at breakfast time; but when did she say she breakfasted? I must surely have mistaken, Emilia, but it strikes me that she said at twelve or one o'clock. However, as she asked you to come, I would have you go by all means, and I am glad to see you look so much pleased."

"You are very kind, indeed," said she, her eyes glistening in a manner that he thought more beautiful than the stars of heaven, though he did not by gesture or expression betray the feeling. "Thank you, Mr. Danby, for taking so much interest in my pleasure. I assure you this is the greatest pleasure that could possibly happen to me. My sweet, dear Lisa, you have not forgotten me, then!"

"No, that most assuredly she has not; for she ran herself out of breath with her questions, and never thought of listening to one of my answers. She seemed to have forgotten nothing about you, and went over all the circumstances of old times with a liveliness of memory which proved that she had no common interest in the matter. But," added he, indulging in a sort of joke, for he was really pleased to see her look so happy, "I don't think she was much charmed with your poor old husband. She gave a saucy sort of stare at my habiliments, I thought, and was comparing me with her beautiful and elegant Emilia; a comparison, my dear, that I never was and never shall be able to stand."

She gave him her hand—she had never felt so pleasantly since their marriage; he pressed it and put it to his lips: he was almost as happy as she was.

However, he took his departure, for it was time to go to his chambers; and saying, "Send to Jonathan for the Red Book, and take care not to be too late, it would be so vexatious to miss her," left the room.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Oh! if to dance all night and dress all day
 Charm'd the small-pox or chased old age away,
 Who would not scorn what housewife's cares proluce,
 Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?—POPE.

It was a very large and handsome house, at the end of Upper Grosvenor Street, and commanding a view of the Park. The trees had just burst forth into their most vivid green, as yet untarnished by the dust and smoke; the sky was of the clearest blue, the sun was shining bright, and glittering upon the gay and brilliant crowds that flashed and fled by.

It was two o'clock, but the breakfast things were not yet removed. The table was prepared for two; the beautiful chased silver urn, two cups of the most rare and delicate Sèvres china, one or two piles of fruit, blushing amid leaves and flowers, a silver basket of bread, whose whiteness might rival that of the napkin, on which it was laid, a French pie, and a few small delicacies of other descriptions—such was the breakfast.

The room was a perfect epitome of elegant luxury. Nothing that a love for art, a refinement of taste—nothing that wealth could command—was wanting there; and all arranged with so just and beautiful a keeping that the most fastidious observer must have been delighted. The delicate white curtains floated beneath the blue silk hangings, and just gently rose and fell with the fresh breezes; the balconies filled with mignonette, roses, and sweet-scented flowers, perfumed the air; and the hum from below came softened by the slight distance from Park Lane with almost a pleasant sort of harmony.

On a sofa, covered with down cushions, half sitting, half lying, in a most elegant and beautiful undress, her fine hair negligently gathered together, and in part covered with a slight thing of lace, half buried in the soft, luxurious cushions, reposed one of the most beautiful creatures that you ever beheld.

She is very much changed since you saw her last. Society and intercourse with the world have given the most charming softness and finished elegance to her manners, while a something, that looks very much like disappointment, has thrown a tender melancholy into her expression which is very interesting.

It is evident that this lovely young creature, with all the means of happiness, is not happy.

She yawns, sips her breakfast, rings the silver bell that is placed beside her; her page, a tiny and very handsome youth,

with dress of velvet and jewelled dagger, and all the fanciful adjustments of a fanciful lady's page, enters.

"Another cup of tea, Lorenzo: that's too sweet."

Another yawn.

"Is the Colonel coming to breakfast, do you know?"

"Charles told me the Colonel had breakfasted in his own room, and was gone out, madam."

A sort of desponding sigh.

She sips her tea.

"How can you forget all the sugar so?"

The delicate double-refined, with silver pincers that were surely made for fairy-land, is dropped into the cup of roses, then raised by a hand white, in truth, as the lily's leaf, and almost as transparent—the beautifully-moulded fingers glittering with a rich ring or two—to lips than which, if Hebe's had been more beautiful, I never saw them painted.

This hand, fair and delicate as it is, can yet hold the pen. On leaves, of a texture which is in itself a beauty, all embossed in fanciful flowers and Cupids, with a pen of gold and agate, this fair young creature, for want of a better friend, has, like poor Emilia, poured forth, from time to time, her thoughts; and I think a few extracts from this album will make you better acquainted with her than pages of description.

"Married! I am at last married! The butterfly is in harness—the gossamer is woven—the wild bird is caged; I am married.

"Everybody wonders, and nobody knows; everybody looks as if they thought and said,—it's very well *now*, but if Colonel Lenox had been plain Colonel Lenox, instead of the Master of Glenlyon, he might have waited long enough for Miss Hesketh. How little they know me!

"Would I have played false to the best feelings of my heart, and become common-place and interested—in short, have made a good match, as it is called? And yet the world judges me so—what matters it?

"I wonder whether other people feel as I do, as if no one on earth understood their motives, judged them justly, appreciated them truly; or whether what appears to me injustice is, in truth, but a representation of what I am—a vain, volatile, self-willed, indolent creature, thoughtless of others, full of myself, idle, and selfish.

"Am I so?—No.

"Am I vain and proud to say this?—No.

"I have faults, faults without number; but I *have* a heart, let them think what they will."

No more was added at that time by the fair contemplator. It was a long time before the fancy seized her to take up the gold and agate pen, and commune with, or rather utter, her thoughts in this way again. The second strain ran thus:—

"This marriage is, after all, a very dull thing. I don't think I like it much. While Lenox was my lover, my thoughts were

always full; I was thinking of the last quarrel, or planning another; I was dressing myself or my room to receive him; I was fearing him, or wishing for him; I was full of sweet uncertainty or sweeter hope. It was very true I did nothing on earth but *feel* all this time. Ah! but now I look back upon it, even the pain was pleasure. I felt such a delightful thrill at my heart whenever I thought of him; I don't know how to express it, but something unreal, imaginative, charming, was thrown over my whole existence. Oh, it was Paradise!

"Now he is out of the way almost all day long—I never see him; when I do, 'tis ten to one he yawns. And, to be sure, I have nothing much to say to him, and I have nothing on earth to do. I don't want to do anything; I have not one object in life. I don't practise, for I shall never play well enough to please Lenox, with his fastidious taste; and, as he does not play himself, he doesn't want me to make a noise and accompany him, as many men do. I do hate drawing, for I draw so very bad; I am ready to start with horror from my own hideous representations. It's all very stupid.

"Shall I ring for the carriage?—but that nasty carriage makes me sick. I wish I could get something new—everything is so dull. Oh, dear me!"

Another long blank in the memorials of the capricious writer. The next seems written in London.

"Now, is not this very odd? How I did want to come to London!—and now I abhor and hate London. Oh, how dreadfully dull many and many a time have I thought Harewood, which Glenlyon is so fond of, and now how I wish to see it again! I wonder whether my auriculas are in flower yet. I wish Lenox—I don't care though—I was going to wish Lenox would go down to the country again; but I shall never like that Harewood much. I only like Haldimands and the Oaks—how I wish he had bought the Oaks instead of that ugly Harewood! After my lying-in we are to go to some watering-place or other, I believe. I don't know where it is to be, and I'm sure I don't care; I like one place as well as another. Oh, Maria!—here she comes, loaded with finery.

"Lah, Maria, what a dress is this!—it will cost millions! I am sure I can't afford it. It is sweetly pretty, lace and silver, and feathers for the head-dress. Tell Mrs. D— it's too expensive; I won't be so extravagant—I won't have it."

"But, madam! Colonel Glenlyon ordered it for you; she says he wishes to see you elegant to-night, ma'am—the Prince will be there; and he called in and desired she would send you everything she had most beautiful, for you to choose from, ma'am; and she sent up Miss Shelly with her compliments, and she thinks, if her taste is consulted, you will certainly choose this, and you will look like an angel in it, which, indeed, you will, ma'am."

"And so I shall, to be sure, child. It's very pretty; carry it up stairs. And now I think I can practise a quadrille step."

"How charmingly I will dance! But they say I must not dance much—let them say it if they will.

"Lor, my dear Lenox, is that you? That's a mighty pretty gown you've given me—you are a dear, good creature—thank you, thank you—there are ten curtseys and one kiss. There—there—now what do you say to these quadrilles? are they charming or not?"

"You pretty creature!"

"Oh, Lenox, stop a moment. See, I have filled my room full of flowers—do come here—look! there's a rose for you; and look here—"

"That's very pretty—what do you call that?"

"That's called love-in-idleness, and that forget-me-not, and that—pooh, I forget their names."

"He's gone!"

"Well, I am just come back from this grand party; that is, I am just awake after it. Oh, goodness! how wearied I am!

"I liked the first part of the evening well enough; there were a great many very fine young men gathered about me. But what do I care for them now? I love Lenox, and when he is with me I feel the most perfect indifference to all others; but, after we had been together about one-hundredth part of a quarter of an hour, he left me with that odious Mrs. G. C. and walked away, and I saw no more of him all the evening. I hate these ways—I am sure when he has left me I care for nothing else. Mrs. G. C. is a very odious, flirting, ugly, I think, fine lady—but any fine lady is better than poor me now.

"And I thought all the young men so stupid; so, after yawning all the evening, I came home at five o'clock, dreadfully tired; and Lenox had been at home and asleep an hour; and now, this morning, he was away before I was awake, and I may take my breakfast in my own room by myself if I like. And when I get up I have nothing to do, for I am so tired and done up—I can't go out for ever.

"Oh life, what a burden art thou! This is, indeed, a miserable existence. Why did the Creator, who is said to be good, send such a wretch as I am to burden the earth? Why do I live? Nobody wants me. Nine short months is it since I was married; and already Lenox can do just as well without as with me—and as for all his relations, I hate them. I am a miserable load to myself—I am of no use to others. There is not that thing I wish for, because there is nothing that could make me happy. Have I not everything the world can give? and yet I am miserable.

"Oh Heaven, I call upon thee!—but will Heaven answer such as I am?"

"They say these are the ravings of discontent—what if they are? If I were poor and miserable, people would pity me; but am I the less wretched because there is no palpable cause?"

"Oh! upon this sofa where I now lie, dressed in the softest manner, surrounded by flatterers, who only wait a word to obey

me—with neither care, nor want, nor anxiety—Heaven knows I envy, with my whole heart, the match-girl who is now crying matches through the street. Oh, days too short of unrequited love! Oh, days still shorter of love and happiness! *Then*, at least, my whole soul was occupied—now all nature seems to me in a dead calm. Oh, Lenox! if you would but come to me this very day and tell me you were ruined, and that I must bake your bread, and make your clothes, and sweep your room, so I might but stay with and be near you; so that while I sewed away, till my nose was as red and my fingers as rough as a bear, were you but sitting at your desk, and that I could talk and chatter, and you smile a little at me now and then, I should be happy!

"I am sure I am not romantic in saying this. I wish to be useful and busy; I wish to live with Lenox; and I am rich and idle, and he never comes near me.

"Is this the happiness he promised me? Is this what I mistook for love?

"Oh! how little did I dream of how transient a nature was the passion I inspired. Nine months!—nine weeks!—I have suffered this for months, yet I see he cannot help it. He is kindness itself to me, but then—he can do without me. I have lost the power to occupy his existence—I am no more to him now than the house-cat."

"Lenox came up to me just now, and found me in tears, for I really was so unhappy I could not help it. He came to me so kindly.

"What's the matter with you, sweet girl?—has anything happened? any bad news?"

"Oh no, nothing."

"Nothing!—then why do you cry? Nay, tell me; I am sure there is something."

"I didn't know how to speak. I had nothing to complain of—nothing I could exactly say in words.

"I shall not be unhappy now you are come."

"He gave me a kiss.

"You get low by being by yourself. Shall I invite Clara to come and see you?"

"Oh no! I don't want Clara or anybody."

"What do you want, then?" smiling a little.

"Something to interest me—something to—"

"Pooh, pooh! you are out of spirits—you'll be gay enough by-and-by at Mrs. M.'s ball."

"I hate balls—"

"Why, then, what would you like to do?"

"To *die*!" I cried, passionately; "for there is not one thing on earth I wish to live for."

"I longed to tell him my whole heart—I longed to say, 'Only love me as you used to do, Lenox—that's all;' but something made it impossible.

"He seemed not to have the slightest idea of what filled my whole thoughts.

"My dear girl," said he, in a grave and somewhat displeased tone, "surely you are very unreasonable. Have you not every thing upon earth to make you happy—what can you want?"

"Oh, Lenox!"

"My dear Lisa, pray don't be so very foolish."

"And I felt that I was foolish, and was quite ashamed of myself; so I kissed him, and smiled too. And here all ended with his thinking me a nervous, low-spirited girl, and no more comprehending my wants and my feelings, than, perhaps—perhaps—I quite do myself."

"He sat down upon the sofa by me, and I sat by him so happy for five minutes or so."

"Then he gave a loud yawn, stretched himself, and left the sofa."

"When he did so—how silly all these little things look upon paper; nobody can remember the effect they have—that yawn, that stretch, seemed to throw me from him distant as millions of worlds."

"How could he care so little about my grief! Ah, the time was—and not so *very* long ago—when he was glad to be allowed to sit for hours by me! he wanted nothing else then."

"Well, I shall go and look in at Arthur's, and see what they are doing there; and I'll order the phaeton to drive round the Park."

"So he rang the bell, ordered the carriage, and went away. I drove round the Park half asleep—came in—dressed for a large dinner-party—then went to Mrs. M——'s assembly. It was a very crowded, noisy, buzzing sort of an affair. People looked gay enough; there was plenty of talking and laughing round me. I listened to none of it—I believe I looked very well: there was a sort of murmur when I came into Mrs. M——'s room. I could not help hearing 'lovely creature,' &c. &c. very often. I wanted Lenox to have heard them—what were they to me?—but he was not there."

"I often think with myself that I will try not to care for him; why should I waste my whole heart and affections upon one who does not want them? My love is even importunate. I wish I could conceal what I feel; it is, I see, a sort of restraint—a bother to him; he seems really wearied of me. I look at my glass—dress myself in the most attractive manner, and wonder where the charm is gone that used to bind him to me. It is plain that often he does not even look at me, when others are surprised at my beauty. This, then, is the end—here finishes my life—"

"No hope of joy—no motive for exertion."

"Young and beautiful, and with a passionate heart, my doom has been to be the idol of a month, and then to sink into a piece of furniture—a mere appendage to the man I could adore."

"I have—I have looked at my laudanum bottle. I have thought to force a few genuine tears from his eyes, but the

thought of my baby stirs within me : at least, I will love it, and it will love me ; and then I shall, perhaps, forget.

" Ah, what a reverse from when a word, a look, of mine was misery or happiness ! I remember the ten thousand tenderest things he said to me—the heart of man never invented tenderer ; and now, as if it had been a dream, when I allude to them, he has forgotten all !

" Nay, he will talk of those days—which are fixed in my heart for ever—as of days of a short insanity, which the passion, not the individual, occasioned.

" Do all men make love so persuasively ? and are all men without intending it, such deep, such exquisite deceivers ? Do all women go through the tortures I endure ? Alas, alas ! why did I ever, ever marry ?"

" My baby is born. I am recovering slowly, but surely. There is a great fuss made about both me and it. They have persuaded me not to nurse it. They say I have not strength—that it would be a confinement to me—and yet I am half sorry—

" I have got a most excellent nurse to take care of the little creature, and a very good wet-nurse, too. The people about me take care of all that.

" I am very fond of it, but I wish they would let me see more of it ; they keep it out of the room, lest it should tire or hurry me. I am sure the serenest moments I have enjoyed for a very long time, are when they will let me hold it in my lap. I have already a thousand schemes for its education. I am sure it shall be very different from mine. I know it will be very fond of me—children always are. It's very pretty already, and I mean to make it everything that is clever and good. Poor Emilia ! I wonder what is become of her—years, years, years—and I dare say she has forgotten me, as I have almost forgotten her. How my life has been crowded with nothings since we parted !—long and long ages ago.

" My baby makes me think of her—and how she used to talk to me ; but I shall never see her again. Pretty little thing, there is something very intelligent in its droll, wondering face ; and when I put it close to my heart I have such a feeling ! I think I am going to be very happy ; it looks so nice in its tiny *basinet*, little red-faced thing, all smothered up in white muslin. Lenox, who hates babies, gave me the most affectionate squeeze to his heart as I was hanging over its pretty bed to-day, and seemed to think it quite as lovely as I did.

" Now I have got this little creature, I shall never want amusement. I shall dress it and undress it, and take such a pleasure in getting it to sleep, and seeing all its pretty ways—I shall be so happy, I am sure."

I will give you no more of these extracts ; they will suffice to paint to you the ill-regulated heart, accustomed only to the baneful pursuit of excitement, and filled with that bitter disap-

pointment which real life proves to those who are only fitted to live in that paradise of romance—Love.

You will pity her, and lament as I do that Colonel Lenox did not prove, what too few husbands do prove, a kind and judicious friend to this wayward but most affectionate trifler.

It was true she had soon thoroughly wearied him by her exactions and her apparent caprices; the root of which he did not, in the least, take the trouble to understand. He had learned to look upon her as a trifler, unworthy to take the place in his heart forfeited by one whose desertion he never had forgiven; it was in that kind of restless state of mind produced by a disappointment of this nature, that he had fallen in the way of the beautiful Lisa, now far more beautiful than she had ever been.

Some years had elapsed since the days of the Oaks; and the remembrance of Emilia, who had so completely vanished from their circle, had faded in both their minds. A long series of events had separated Lisa from her schoolday life and schoolday friendships; and as Colonel Lenox never alluded to the subject, Lisa had supposed that her impression of his attachment had been unfounded, and that he had never really cared for any one but herself.

So he declared, and so he believed, in the brief madness of the passion which she had excited.

This was now their third season in town; another infant had been added to their nursery, but without adding to the felicity of the lovely mother.

She found babies, like the other things of this world, incapable of furnishing that perpetual excitement for which she was languishing.

Of serious duty, except during her brief communication with Emilia, she had never been taught to think. Her whole life was but one pursuit of pleasure, and a succession of disappointments at finding pleasure never could satisfy a heart and mind like hers. But she had already learned the fatal secret to dazzle and confuse her mind by the bustle of endless engagements; and the gold and agate pen no longer was called upon to record the thoughts and feelings of a full and tender heart.

Colonel Lenox had assumed the name of Glenlyon on occasion of an inheritance which had fallen to him. Sir Thomas and Lady Hesketh were dead, and Lisa had inherited a large fortune, though the estate had gone to the heir-at-law.

It was now, in the dearth of greater objects, become a very strong desire with Colonel Lenox to re-assume his family name, of which he was extremely proud, and it was on account of business connected with this subject that Mr. Danby had been consulted; something had occurred which had determined him to the very unusual step of a call at Colonel Lenox's house, where he had seen the beautiful Mrs. Lenox, as he has related.

It never crossed Mr. Danby's mind that there could be any connexion between the Colonel Lenox in question, and the

but he thinks no name so pretty as Lenox, and the time was when I thought so too—but I care very little about it now. But he's going to be Lenox again; and so I have never tried to learn to call him Glenlyon."

Emilia continued silent.

Then Mrs. Lenox said—

"The next question to be asked and answered, now we know whom we have married, is, I suppose, what children have we got? I've got two, I believe. How many have you got—six?"

"Not one," said Emilia.

"Well, I dare say that's quite as well. That sort of thing is such a plague, and one sees so little of one's children after all. I used to think, I remember, when I was young and foolish—when I was so weak, Emilia, as to wish to be loved, and to love—and all that nonsense—"

Emilia's hand quivered a little as Lisa said this.

"I used to think how passionately I should love my children—that I should live for them; but things are so oddly ordered in this world, I think one never does what one best likes. I never hardly see my children; I am in bed half the morning, and they are in bed all the night, which is the only time when I am alive—but would you like to see them?"

"I should like excessively to see them."

She rang the bell, the page appeared.

"Tell Mrs. Reynolds to bring down the children; this lady wants to see them."

The page returned with—

"Master Lenox is just going out, and Miss Lenox is asleep."

"Ah, that is always it; but I will have my own way for once. Tell Mrs. Reynolds that I beg she will bring the children down, as a very old friend of mine wishes most particularly to see them."

After some short delay, the door opened, and the children appeared. The first, a wild and beautiful boy, of about two years old, with his hat and feather hanging on one side of his face; the other, a most lovely female infant of four months, asleep in the arms of its wet-nurse.

Emilia kissed, or strove to kiss, the elder little rebel, who pushed her away with both his hands, and turned his face wilful and playful from her; she then took the little babe in her arms and kissed it very softly, while her colour rose and fell rapidly.

At last she said—

"There seem strange inequalities in this world."

"As how, dear Emilia?"

"I think it all falls to your share," with a gentle smile.

"All what?"

"Every good thing which God gives he seems to have given to you." There was a slight bitterness in her tone as she spoke, but, recovering herself, she smiled again, and said, looking at her with great affection, "and to complete all, he has made you that which nobody can envy, because every one must love you."

Mrs. Lenox shook her head, but turned away and said nothing.

"Come here, you rebel, and give me a kiss," said she, rallying her spirits, and beginning to play with her boy; then she took and kissed and hugged her sleeping babe; and then, saying she was sick of them, both sent them out of the room, and, sinking again upon her sofa by the side of Emilia, continued her interrupted talk.

"Dear Emilia," she added, looking at her with tenderness, "it does me good to see you. When I look at you, it reminds me of those days, so long, long ago, when we were both—ah! how different from what we are now! I had a heart then, but I don't know what has become of it; yet, when I see you, it seems to come like a recollection again. I don't think—what was I about to say? What a life have I led since we parted at the Oaks! And, ah! my Emilia! had you not better have—"

"Let us talk of something else than the Oaks," said Mrs. Danby, interrupting her. "I endeavour to forget the Oaks, and all that part of my life. I have a home—and kindness—and, though not blest as you are with such lovely children, I—"

"Ah! you were always contented and always happy, and I was always happy and never contented, that was the difference! And it is impossible for any one to be happier now, as the world goes, than I am, and yet I should not care if I were dead to-morrow; but I am so tired and good-for-nothing to-day, I shall only infect you with my own blue-devils. What a beautiful day I protest it is, and past four o'clock! Will you take a drive with me in the Park? Do, dear Emily."

Emilia consented, with the proviso that she should be released by half-past five, Mr. Danby's dinner-hour.

Mrs. Lenox opened wide her beautiful eyes with astonishment, but promised to drive her home at the proper hour.

And the languid beauty and her grave and quiet friend were soon seated side by side in the most elegant of little equipages, and, with a tiny postilion on one of the tiny ponies, were soon going the round of the Park.

The Park was full of gay company; and the carriage of the lovely Mrs. Lenox was soon surrounded by admiring cavaliers on horseback, all of whom raised their eyes or their glasses to observe the new face by her side. Emilia, pale and faded as she was, had lost little in beauty, and had even gained in the interest of her appearance; and as she sat, silently reclining in the carriage, while Mrs. Lenox, now in animated spirits, laughed, and flirted, and chatted away, full of talent, whim, and gaiety, she was scarcely a less attractive object than her volatile and fascinating friend.

"They seemed to me to be making more than ordinary fuss about you, Lisa, in the Park," was Colonel Lenox's address to his wife, as, both dressed to go out for dinner, they were waiting a few seconds for their carriage in the drawing-room.

"You are usually a pretty powerful centre of attraction—but

there was some one I did not in the least know in your carriage. Who can you have picked up now?"

"Did you look at her, or did you not look at her?" said Lisa. "You very seldom, signor, trouble yourself in the least either with me or my carriage. My new attraction must have been peculiarly attractive, as it attracted *you* to look that way. Well, what did you think of her?"

"Rather a fine figure of a woman, if one may judge by her *pose*, which was elegant and distinguished enough; but as for her face, your new friend is old enough to be your grandmother, Lisa. I can't imagine where you picked her up."

"Nonsense!" said Lisa; "why need you make any concealment about it?—you know very well."

"I have not the slightest suspicion."

"I can tell you what, sir, you will make *me* very suspicious if you go on so," said Lisa, colouring.

"What *can* you mean?"

"Mean! Good Heavens, Lenox! you don't mean to say, or to pretend to make me believe, you didn't know who was in the carriage with me?"

"I do pretend to say so; and now you seem so unwilling to tell me, I really beg to know, Lisa. You have lately been in the humour to pick up such odd acquaintances, and to make yourself so thoroughly independent of me, that I begin to think it is as well I *should* know whom you please to honour by exhibiting them to the whole town at your side?"

"Independent! strange people!" said Lisa, putting up her lip; "and I wonder what strange people Colonel Lenox gets acquainted with—he knows best—but who's afraid? I challenge him to compare *his* new friends with mine any day in the year."

"Do you mean to tell me or not, without further trifling?" said he, angrily.

"No, I do not; for I am sure, if you would own it, you know as well as I do. And why you choose to make all this mystery about it, I cannot conceive! Unless, indeed—"

"I make the mystery! Was ever anything on earth so unreasonable and provoking as you are?"

"Indeed! Very well; I am sorry for you, poor man!" and, humming a tune, she stepped out into the conservatory at the end of her drawing-room, and began to busy herself with gathering some flowers; while he, vexed and out of temper, with little reason enough as it should seem, sat brushing the hat which he held in his hand with his coat-sleeve.

The time was past when his young and beautiful wife heeded his humours; she seemed, indeed, to take quite a pleasure in provoking him. She came up to him from the conservatory with a rose in her hand, put it to his face and said,—

"Sweet, isn't it? sweet as your temper! And so you pretend you thought her changed?"

"Pooh!" said he, ungraciously pushing the rose away; "I tell you I have not a conception who you are talking about; but she looked so like a tragedy queen, that I suspect you of having

picked up some second-rate actress, whom you fancy a Siddons, to make a pet of. And where, in the name of Heaven, did you set her down? I am confident I saw your carriage turning out of Chancery Lane, as I came up from Hoare's, where I had occasion to go this afternoon."

"Exactly so; in Chancery Lane I set her down. And oh, dear Lenox! is it not horrid to think of that dear creature spending her life in such a hole as that?"

He looked so naturally, as if he did not in the least comprehend her, that at last she was half convinced that he really had not recognised Emilia.

"Well, you really do look so divinely stupid, that for *once* I believe you to be sincere: that woman was Emilia Danby!"

"Danby!" he repeated. "Emilia!"

"She who was once that lovely, blooming, animated Emilia Wyndham, that I—and perhaps you—" she added, looking at him askance, "loved so dearly—is now the pale and faded, but charming-looking creature, that I—but I beg it may not be *you*—mean to love exceedingly again."

He did not seem to heed her; he was looking intently at something in the crown of his hat.

"The deuce!" said he: "that careless rascal has not given me my own hat;" and he rose and walked out of the room.

"Now I wonder what there was in that hat?" said his wife to herself; "for he is such an arch-deceiver, that I never know what to believe of him."

However, the carriage was at the door before he had got the right hat; which, as it proved, was exactly the one he held in his hand before; it was, however, well pulled over his brows as he handed his wife into the carriage; and he was so busy letting down and pulling up the window, and found it so impossible to settle the window-strap at a just length upon the pin, that she never even saw his face till they stopped at the house where they were to dine.

She, flung back in a corner of the carriage, was by this time far from the subject, and was speculating whether the Duke of C—— would be at this dinner or not.

The Duke of C—— was there.

And the Duke of C—— sat by Mrs. Lenox at dinner, who really looked the loveliest little creature that ever uttered wild and pretty things in a voice like music, and with lips of coral; and the Duke, a remarkably tall, handsome, and elegant man, was evidently so much enchanted, that, contrary to his usual wont, he appeared in the drawing-room afterwards; and it was not till Mrs. Lenox went away to the opera that he went away too, and he was in his box the whole evening, and with his glass very rarely directed to the stage.

Colonel Lenox, contrary to his custom also, came into his wife's box that night. She was quite alone; and as he sat behind her, so that she could not see his face, he said, after a long silence,—

"Now don't be tiresome, Lisa; is it possible that that pale.

almost elderly-looking woman, that I saw in your carriage to-day, could be Emilia Wyndham? I assure you, upon my honour, I did not know her in the least; I never saw any one upon earth so changed."

Mrs. Lenox, with all her airy indifference, was not yet become so very indifferent as not to feel her heart beat with pleasure at this speech.

She turned playfully and saucily to him, and said,—

"I never heard you say such rude, bearish things in my life, Lenox. I positively will tell her what you say."

"Do, if you please," said he, carelessly; "but where on earth did you pick her up?"

"Why, before you came to town the other day, your solicitor had made an appointment with Mr. Danby to meet him at your house, and you were not come back, and they showed him up by mistake to me, and, good Heavens! I knew *him* in a moment. He was not changed the least possible atom from the man who walked by Emilia that famous and never-to-be-forgotten night upon the terrace at the Oaks. He's just as ugly—older he could not be if he lived to be as old as Methuselah—and so I made her out. But he must be the greatest hunks in the world, for you know everybody said he was most cruel rich, and yet he keeps her in such a place as you never in your life did see."

"Perhaps he's jealous of her?"

"Very likely. Yes, I dare say that old-fashioned vico still holds in Chancery Lane, though it is centuries since men have paid their wives such a compliment in Grosvenor Square. Yes, I should not really wonder—perhaps Mr. Danby *does* still care enough for his wife to be jealous of her."

And she thought in her heart, "I would be content to be locked up in Chancery Lane all my life, to know that my husband was jealous of me!"

There was a silence of some minutes. At last,—

"What are you thinking of, Lisa?" said he.

"Of how I could possibly make you jealous," she said, in rather a hurt tone.

"I'm sure I don't know; but I advise you not to try."

"You *could* be jealous, then?"

"I advise you not to try," said he, coldly. "It's more easy to make husbands jealous—if jealous the word must be, but I prefer any other—to offend them, to irritate them by levity and vanity, than many women think. *Jealous* I am not much inclined to be, but *displeased* I may very easily be."

Her countenance fell, but her spirit rose at this unkindness; and, turning her sweet face away, she began to look out from her box, to place herself in the most engaging attitude for display, and seemed to think of nothing henceforward but of endeavouring to attract the eyes of the whole house. He soon quitted her box, and left her to pursue her amusement.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Oh, how much more doth beauty wondrous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give !—SHAKESPEARE.

AND what were, meanwhile, Emilia's feelings?

Refreshed and enlivened by her drive in the Park—her blood flowing through her veins with a freedom long unknown—her spirits cheered by the beautiful scene of herbage, foliage, and gay company which she had quitted—she was set down at her dull, dark house in Chancery Lane.

Many would have entered this gloomy prison in melancholy and discontent—it would have been still further darkened by contrast with the sweet air, the bright sun, the refreshing green, the brightness, the animation, they had left.

Not so Emilia. She had so schooled and disciplined her mind, that any little interruption of this sort in the course of her monotonous life was hailed as a refreshment, an assistance, and an encouragement to persevere in the course of duty on which she had resolved.

She had said little during her drive, but had listened, amused, yet secretly alarmed, to the gay prattle which passed between her lovely companion and all the admiring cavaliers who surrounded the carriage. She had been cheered by the affection which Mrs. Lenox had lavished upon her, and her heart was deeply touched and interested by the sight of her children; for, if there was that thing in the world which Emilia doated on, it was upon little children.

All these pleasant, or at least interesting, thoughts had called her from herself, and done her infinite good; and she felt that the refreshment of Lisa's society—of a return with her, as it were, to the light of day, to those pleasant habits of life to which her early years had been accustomed—would give a strength to her bodily and mental frame which she had long felt that she was beginning to want.

She was like a plant that had been buried in a cold, dark cellar, and to which the fresh air and warm sun restore its native strength and colour.

Nothing could be more affectionate than Mrs. Lenox, nor anything apparently more sincere than the pleasure she expressed in thus renewing the old and intimate intercourse between them; but there was one thought which already intruded to mar this happy prospect.

Sitting upon a fine horse at some distance from the ring, under the trees in that part of the Park which is called the Wood, she had seen a figure which, do what she would to maintain her outward composure, it was impossible to behold again with indifference.

He had turned his head, and given a glance at the carriage as it passed; but he did not, as her beating heart told her to expect, join it. She could not, however, be mistaken in the

face—it was changed, greatly changed, yet she could not but recognise it at once.

The gentleman turned his horse's head, and galloped across the Park; but as they came down again by the Serpentine, and there paused to inhale the fresh wind that blew from the water, she had seen him again at a little distance, and again he was watching the carriage.

As soon as Mrs. Danby entered her own house, avoiding interruption, she passed rapidly up stairs into her own little bedroom, and, bolting the door, sat down to collect her thoughts.

He was there, then.

He, from whom she had thought herself irrevocably and for ever separated, had entered into her circle of existence once more. She had seen him, but he had not appeared to recognise her; and his countenance—at least so far as her hasty glances could assure her of it—showed that he was greatly changed. There was the air of a man of high fashion—a force of expression in his countenance and carriage which differed a good deal from the elegant, handsome, but most natural and somewhat romantic Colonel Lenox of the Oaks. There was something high and military in his air—an aspect of command, not to say of imperious command, which, though it might have added to his attractions in many eyes, disappointed her.

He was no longer the Lenox she had loved so truly.

Still, her treacherous heart beat wildly when she saw him and her good and delicate conscience began to ask questions.

What ought she to do? Might she, without danger to her own honour and that of Mr. Danby, indulge an intimacy with the wife, which must inevitably lead to further intercourse with the husband? Her heart answered boldly to the appeal—her pure, honest, innocent heart, answered it with fearless courage. She felt, it was true, that infirmity of feeling had for the moment betrayed her into an emotion neither loyal, perhaps, to Mr. Danby nor to her friend; but it was but the emotion of a moment. She felt the assurance that her faith to both was firmly planted on a rock; she had the gratification of feeling that she might rely upon herself, not as the rash boast of ignorant security, but as the reward of long-tried effort and habitual self-control.

Colonel Lenox henceforward would be nothing to her.

One indulgence she thought might be yet allowed her—his happiness was still dear—his and Lisa's. She thought she already saw that the welfare of both was in peril, and that her influence might assist in saving the sweet and volatile creature from the many snares with which she saw her to be surrounded. The idea was more delightful to that poor, desolated heart than any of you, surrounded by the influences of kind domestic affections, will find it easy to believe.

The next subject for consideration was—ought she not, now, to make Mr. Danby aware of the true state of her feelings? Out of regard for his happiness she had long concealed them—ought she not, now, to make him acquainted with everything, and leave to him the decision of her future conduct?

This was the course prescribed by sincerity, candour, truth, and principle; and such a course was sure to approve itself to Emilia. He had treated her on his part with little confidence, and his habitual reserve had infected even her frank and open-hearted temper with something of its own constraint. She was also become rather afraid of him, and had not been able to acquire the habit of speaking to him very openly; but, upon this occasion, she resolved to do it; and with an eye bright with conscious integrity, a brow unclouded, and a heart relieved, went down to meet her husband and father at dinner; for, after all, Mr. Danby did not dine in the city, but had ordered dinner somewhat later than ordinary at home.

The poor father was, as usual, the object of her unremitting attention during the meal. Her husband sat, as was his wont, with papers by his side, at which he, from time to time, looked while he ate. There were times when he never once spoke to either of them during the whole dinner; and he was so absent to-day that he seemed quite to have forgotten the event so intensely interesting to Emilia; but she never took little things ill; she looked at him, and smiled to herself at his forgetfulness, and busied herself in preparing for her father his treat of fish; for he required as much attention as a little child.

The poor man was in high glee over his indulgence, and said so many happy and affectionate things, that, foolish as they were, they gave her much pleasure; and her spirits kept rising more and more, till at length she felt quite equal to the task she had proposed to herself. However, upon Mr. Danby thrusting back his chair, and leaving the room abruptly before the cloth was removed, she found she must postpone it till the evening.

It was then after tea, and when her father had gone to bed, that, seeing him at last lay down those never-ending papers, she summoned up her courage, and began with—

"You do not ask me what I did with myself this morning?"

"Why should I? You spent your time much as usual, I suppose."

"No—that, indeed, I did not. I went to see the blooming and beautiful young lady you told me of—Mrs. Glenlyon—"

"Oh, ay! I remember;—a former friend of yours, if I recollect right?"

"Yes—but her name was not then Glenlyon."

"Of course not. She was not married, I think, in those days."

"Are you acquainted with the gentleman she married?"—her colour, in spite of all her determination, rising to her cheek—"he, too, has changed his name since those days."

"Yes—his name was once Lenox:" but his attention was now aroused, and, fixing one of his keen and penetrating glances upon her, "of course you know nothing of *him*?" he said.

"There was a gentleman, Mr. Danby, whom perhaps you may recollect, staying at the Oaks the first time you ever were there. But very possibly you may have altogether forgotten him?"

"No, I have *not*," said Mr. Danby, with a countenance of grave attention, as if he was prepared to hear more, and his severe and penetrating eye fixing her like that of the basilisk; "but I understood that young man perished in the battle of Albuera."

"He did *not*," said she, in a low voice, and endeavouring to raise her eye to his; but the eye she met was so steady, so piercing, so grave, that hers sank before it.

Honest as was her heart, her eye played her false in the encounter. She went on in a low voice, which she vainly endeavoured to make steady. "There was a mistake in the returns—did you not see it corrected in the newspapers?"

"And you never told me?" cried he, in a loud voice of anger and emotion.

"Why should I tell you?" said she, in a tone of gentle remonstrance. "Why should I suppose it could interest you? How should I know you had ever even read the return? What was Colonel Lenox, *then*, to either of us?"

A sarcastic, suspicious smile—that smile which she equally disliked and dreaded—curled his lip. She knew when he smiled so that he never believed any person.

Still it was her duty, and she always did her duty, to proceed; so she went on—a little hurriedly though:—

"That Colonel Lenox it is for whom you are now concerned. That Colonel Lenox it is who has married Miss Hesketh."

He started.

"Mr. Danby," she said, with a dignity and composure, the result of her honest determination to do him right, "what my youthful feelings might have been before I ever became acquainted with you, you never inquired. The delicacy of your feelings—your confidence in me—were equally great. I thank you for both—as for the other innumerable proofs of your generous affection."

There was now a deep attention, but no softening countenance.

"Separated, as I then believed I was for ever, from one with whom so many happy days had been spent—so many dear associations formed—I did not think it would be for your happiness to know that there was one tie more painful than the rest to break when I gave myself to you. It *was* broken."

Still doubt and suspicion clouded his countenance.

"When I gave you my hand, Mr. Danby, I came to you with the resolution to give my humblest duty, and all I could of my heart."

"Ah!"

"The rest, sir, lay in ashes."

"Go on," he said.

"I believed then, and I think still, that the true way never to rekindle those ashes was to keep my secret to myself, and dismiss it from my thoughts, with the things that *had* been."

"And you did? You dare to say that you did?" said he, almost fiercely. "Nay, Emilia—no lie—a dissembler I may have thought you—a liar I never thought you."

She was hurt—deeply hurt. She little guessed the cause of this distrust—those fatal papers. It had been his impression that they had been written *since* her marriage. It had never once suggested itself to his thoughts that they might have existed *before*.

"I do not know," said she, with some spirit, "why I should persevere in opening my heart to you, since I see that you do not believe me."

He shook his head, but said,—

"I believe much of what you say, Emilia. I have very seldom met with any person, man or woman, and could believe *all* that they might say; but go on."

"I think I have said all that I had to say: perhaps you will not believe me when I add, that if I wish—as I do most earnestly wish—to renew my intimacy with Lisa, no thought that you could by possibility disapprove mingles with this. Still I did not think myself, as was once the case, justified in electing myself into a judge in this matter. I have laid my heart open to you; and it is for you to decide what I am to do."

He looked steadily, and almost sternly at her, as he said,—

"And you are prepared to assure me, that you never, in word, thought, or deed, *indulged* the feelings which you tell me you had resolved to conquer?"

"Never!"

"Could you swear this?"

"No," said she, shrinking, "our thoughts are questionable things—we are not always masters of them; but never, if I can trust my own heart, have I broken my loyalty and faith to you by *indulging* the thoughts which might arise."

"I do not know what you call *indulging*," said he, turning away from her coldly.

"On that one fatal evening, when I thought that he I had perhaps wronged was dead," said she, with much emotion, "I was surprised into an expression of feeling, which, now I perceive you were aware of its cause, I own might displease you. I thought him gone for ever, and that it was useless to trouble you or disturb your peace by my vain sorrow; but, believe me, I did not indulge it: when I was come to myself, I almost rejoiced in it—I did indeed. Alas, alas! what has poisoned your heart against me, Mr. Danby? I intended to be candid and sincere. Why will you look upon me in that terribly suspicious manner? Do you think I deserve it? You *know* I do not."

"Ah, Emilia!" said he, with a heavy sigh, "forgive me—I thought you more than woman."

"Alas! what can you mean? How have I forfeited your esteem? I thought the course I pursued was right. Indeed I think so still. What do the hidden secrets of the heart avail? But now it is different—I must meet him now, in the intercourse of intimate domestic life, once more. I *know*," said she, her clear eye, now beaming bright with truth and honour, meeting his, "that I *can* meet him without impeachment of my loyalty to you. But I have no right to erect my conscience to

be a judge in this matter. You know all, Mr. Danby—decide for me. What you determine I shall most implicitly and honourably obey.”

In spite of all his hidden reasons, as he thought, he felt ashamed of his suspicions.

Her brow was so open—her whole countenance so instinct with honest sincerity.

“Emilia,” he said, “I shall trust you: I do not wish or choose, after having played the contemptible part of a man who too fondly loved, to complete the character by terminating with that of the jealous pantaloon. I confide in you, Emilia. It is my wish—my injunction—that this intimacy should proceed as if nothing of all this had ever existed; and if you deceive me *again!*—why, you will only have completed the miserable history of the man who would have died to make you happy.”

He rose, in some emotion, from his chair, and abruptly left the room.

“Mr. Danby!”

She longed to call him back—touched, melted, yet wondering and perplexed—she longed to throw herself at his feet, and beseech him to explain what he meant.

But, stung to the quick by what he believed her duplicity, even at the very moment when she was professing the most undisguised avowal of her feelings, he hastily left his house, and retired, as he had so often before done, to assuage the wounds of his heart amid the business of his chambers.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

There never was any heart truly great and generous, that was not also tender and compassionate.—*SOUTH.*

MRS. LENOX came home that night from the opera considerably less *ennuyée*, and considerably more excited, than she had perhaps done since the ever-to-be-regretted days of her passion for Colonel Lenox.

The unfortunate conversation about jealousy had raised feelings—had summoned up a spirit—in the bosom of the faulty, volatile, but affectionate young wife, which, had her husband only used the knowledge he possessed of the sex in order to understand, he would have been rather less careless in exciting.

The object of a brief and sudden passion, which was the result of his own deeply-resented disappointment—her great beauty—and the attachment, too little controlled and too little concealed which he had excited—he had loved with vehemence for a few brief hours—to awaken as from a dream, when the realities of every-day life had destroyed those delusions of the imagination amid which alone such a passion as his can dwell. He had been more than lover as lover—he was less than husband as husband. He had been little accustomed of late to the enjoyment of domestic tenderness, and he was naturally of a temper little indulgent; for he was penetrating rather than just in his

way of thinking: he was little accustomed to balance the faults against the good qualities of those around him, and strike a righteous account; for he was fastidious rather than sound in his ideas.

His model of woman had been formed, as I believe that of most men is formed, upon the ideal of his first love. He had respected, and esteemed, and admired Emilia for qualities, the very contemplation and association with which rendered him a better man. He felt this, and he had the sense to value her still more for the effect she produced upon his character. While under her influence, he felt the moral progression, so to speak, the sense of which is the most exquisite and delicate of human enjoyments. And he had accustomed himself to regard her as a sort of tutelary angel, attached to his life, under whose divine influence he was to become all that it is best for man to be.

Everything that belonged to the higher qualities of his nature—the finer moralities—the more deep and real experiences of religious power—all that which was to elevate him above the herd of gallant, gay, but unthinking and erring young men with whom he was surrounded, was to be derived from her. It was thus that he had loved her; it was thus that he had regarded her; and though, as I have said, his pecuniary circumstances, and a sort of weak fear of hampering himself with an engagement, had prevented him from speaking those irrevocable words which would have secured her for his own, he looked upon her as so unquestionably to be his some time or other, that I believe the most unexpected revolution in the laws of nature could hardly have astounded him more than did the sight of her name, coupled with that of Mr. Danby, in the newspapers.

Of the circumstances of the marriage he only learned, as a piece of cursory intelligence from his father, that, by Sir Herbert Montague's account, Miss Wyndham had done a good thing for herself in marrying a very rich lawyer. The sale of the Oaks, and the state of Mr. Wyndham's affairs, were related in the like brief manner. Little did Colonel Lenox comprehend by it the real state of the case. He hastily concluded that Emilia had been tempted, by the prospect of great wealth, to form a new connexion, and forget all that had passed between them. He had seen many girls do so before her; and while he bitterly resented her inconstancy, he quite forgot to ask himself how far his own uncertain conduct might be to blame.

Indeed, if he had reflected much upon it, he might perhaps have endeavoured to rejoice that he had failed to secure a heart so easily diverted from him.

Still Emilia had left too deep an impression to be easily effaced; he could form no plan of happiness in which she did not make a part; and every idea of domestic life was flat and insipid in which she did not share. The first effect of his disappointment was a sort of reckless defiance, leading to an irregularity of conduct, which his love for her had rendered till then impossible: its second, a certain hardening and lowering of the tone of character, which such a course is certain, sooner or later,

to produce: the last, his falling headlong into the short and delirious passion which Lisa had inspired—soon to awaken, as from a dream—and return to those old feelings which had become to him as a second nature. But, what was worst, he committed the great injustice of perpetually comparing in thought this too trifling and volatile creature with the sacred idol he worshipped in his heart; and visiting her short-comings, her caprices, her exactions, and her whims, not with affectionate correction or merciful indulgence, but with such contempt and indifference as these secret comparisons of the real with the ideal are certain to engender.

“How to make the best of it.”

Alas! that homely duty escapes too often the more susceptible and refined, while it blesses the humble and the good. He could not, and he would not, condescend to make this sort of righteous compromise between his imagination and his affections. He would not endeavour to discern what was really excellent, under all this waywardness and whim of his companion; far less would he condescend to the task of endeavouring to disentangle this labyrinth—correct what was evil—encourage what was good—and attempt to preserve her happiness and his own.

After a very few fruitless endeavours in this way, he gave up the whole thing as a lost hope; taught himself to consider his situation as no worse than that of numbers of men of his acquaintance who had vain and silly wives; and sought refuge in the same compensations—his clubs, his race-horses, his men-parties; and his being as little at home as possible.

Lisa, as we have seen, first grieved over this defection with impassioned tenderness, and then sought to escape from her own wounded feelings by a course of reckless dissipation, which only served to confirm her husband in his contemptuous opinion of her. She perceived this; and in that sort of despairing defiance with which a heart so wounded and so ill-chastised as hers is prone to meet this species of injustice, she seemed to take a wild pleasure in justifying that opinion of her which in her secret soul she knew she did not deserve.

Till now she had only sought to divert thought, and, if possible, provoke him into some kind of attention, by a round of the utmost dissipation and extravagance; but this dangerous course could not be continued long without leading her—young, imaginative, and heedless of consequences—still further than she had intended; and the conversation in the box at the opera upon jealousy had given a new and fatal impulse to her ideas. In spite of his disclaimer, she was penetrating enough to perceive that he *might* be jealous; and the triumph of wounding him to the quick, in spite of his pretended indifference, was too dear not to be attempted.

I left her sitting in front of her box at the opera, intent, to all appearance, upon what was going on upon the stage, and displaying one of the most beautiful faces and forms you ever beheld, with an affectation of almost childish negligence which

was excessively attractive; and I left one man, reclining in his double box, with his lorgnettes almost constantly directed towards her.

It was the fashion in those days to go into the crush-room upon leaving the opera, and Mrs. Lenox entered it, leaning upon the arm of one of those innumerable fetch-and-carry spaniels who seem to be necessary appendages to women of fashion, and appear quite content to receive, as the reward of their assiduities, that sort of reflected importance which in consequence falls upon them.

Her cavaliers were for the most part of this description, and she had the most hearty contempt for every one of them—manifested, however, with such playful impertinence, that scarcely any one was ever offended, and, most certainly, no one alienated. She moved, therefore, fancy-free, amid this crowd of followers and admirers, till her most evil destiny threw her into communication with the Duke of C——, that most unprincipled and successful of deceivers.

He was a young man, had just returned from the Continent, and for two seasons had not been in London. It was therefore quite as a novelty that he had first seen her at a large London party; and he thought her the prettiest and the most delightful little novelty that he had met with for a long time. To him, hackneyed as he was in the ways of both men and women, there was something new, *naïve*, whimsical, and impertinent, at once in her tone and manner, that was infinitely exciting. He thought he was the most fortunate man in the world to find himself immediately provided, on his return, with what would afford an interest that possibly might last out the whole season.

He had been introduced to her; and she who, alas! in her corrupt and evil education, had learned to reckon the pride and value of a conquest by the character for levity and inconstancy of the captive, thought nothing could possibly be so glorious as to bind this celebrated rover in her fetters. Secure in her own secret love for her husband, she fancied that nothing really evil could arise from such trifling, and was secretly proud to make him aware what others, quite as accomplished and far superior in consequence to himself, could think of her.

Let me pause for a moment. Let me beg of you to reflect a few seconds upon the dreadful accumulation of evil habits, evil thoughts, evil passions, evil principles, described in this slight sketch of the situation of all parties; and yet, such are the principles, habits, and passions by which, at this very day, hundreds and thousands of fleeting beings are impelled.

It was the third time that they had met.

She had been quite aware, as she sat in careless negligence looking at the stage, whose eye had been fixed upon her; and she entered the crush-room leaning upon Mr. Wilmot's arm (a sort of led-cousin, the led-captain of old stories), and looking with the most coquettish unconsciousness that you ever beheld. Simplicity itself!—perfectly unaware of, and insensible to the kind of buzz of admiration that saluted her, and talking to Mr.

Wilmot, and the many lady and gentlemen friends around her, with the most engaging indifference to the homage proffered on all sides. The Duke understood all these little manœuvres perfectly well, but he did not like her the less—rather the more—for them. Moral approbation was the very last thing that ever entered into his thoughts when he admired any one.

He was an adept in his fatal and wicked game; he looked just as unconcerned and negligent as herself, and stood leaning against a marble table in a most elegant attitude, displaying his remarkably fine figure, and talking to one of his friends.

Her carriage was called, and, mortified and disappointed, she was passing him to leave the room. Then, if you care for such an odious scene, you should have seen his look of electrified delight, as if this was the first moment he had been aware of her presence; and the expression of deep, almost reverential assiduity, with which he held out his arm to assist her in making her way through the crowd.

Such a pleasant reverse of feeling, instead of the mortifying disappointment of the moment before!—a sort of suppressed emotion, a slight trembling, as she laid her hand on his arm—a few low words of doubtful meaning!

Oh, base and practised deceiver!

She was now, for the first time since her marriage, occupied at her solitary breakfast with one subject, to the exclusion of all others, and that subject neither her husband, her children, nor her friend. She was wondering what the Duke could mean by what he had said; he might mean much—he might mean nothing. Was she to resent as impertinent? Was she to pity as unhappy? Was she to forget as of no real import? Then the jealous looks of many of her female friends, all emulous to attract the attention of this celebrated *roué*, as she carried him away from among them all—evidently a most willing captive to her charms! The delightful reverse of feeling she had experienced, when he started, as it were, into life and observance, and for her alone!

So she sat, playing with her tea-spoon, in a pleasant reverie, till the clock struck four; and then she remembered that she had promised Mrs. Danby to be in Chancery Lane by that hour, and to take her to drive out before her husband's five o'clock dinner.

She rang the silver bell hastily, and inquired whether the carriage was in waiting; then sent for her maid, ordered her favourite bonnet and favourite cloak, and put both on with a care and attention most unusual; for she was generally as careless in her toilet as in other things. She did not even ask for her children, but got into her carriage, and went musing up the Strand, heedless of everything around her.

Had she not been so engaged, she might have seen her husband, followed by his servant, slowly riding down the street, with the air of a man lost in profound melancholy. He, too had been in Chancery Lane.

An invincible desire—a curiosity not to be resisted—had led

him to visit the place where she had chosen to take up her dwelling, in preference, as it would seem, to that which he might have had to offer. He had looked upon the small, dingy-looking house which he had ascertained to be that of Mr. Danby, and could only marvel at the inexplicable infatuation which had led that gay and blooming creature to accept so strange and unnatural a fate. He began to think that some mystery never yet comprehended must lie at the bottom of all this.

The proud, resentful resolution he had at first made, never to speak to Emilia again, began to yield to softer and kinder sentiments; he began to inquire whether she could be happy in an existence so apparently foreign to all she had formerly loved and delighted in—to marvel what strange fascination had come over her. He wished to see her, to speak to her, and to satisfy his sore and wounded heart by at least endeavouring to comprehend the cause which had led to this desertion. He resolved to be presented to Emilia by his wife.

He did not conscientiously ask his heart, as she had done, how far this would be prudent or would be right—how far he was acting honourably by the partner to whom he had pledged his existence, in thus suffering so much thought, so much tender regret, still to linger around the image of another.

He never reflected how great was the injustice of such indulgence. But, alas for the cause of all this evil!—the cause which had blighted yet another existence! Alas for the extent of the ruin occasioned by the faults and weaknesses of an individual so insignificant as Mr. Wyndham!

Seeing his wife's carriage going up the Strand, Colonel Lenox conjectured at once her errand; and, impatient to be introduced to Emilia—anxious to read some part at least of her history in a countenance and manner which he felt he never should misunderstand—he slowly took the way which led to the Park.

The two friends had met this afternoon with an air of almost equal gravity on both sides.

Lisa gave an affectionate rather than her usual animated greeting to her friend; while Emilia, absorbed by her own feelings, after the first few sentences had been exchanged, relapsed into silence; and thus they pursued their way almost without uttering a syllable. Emilia, pre-occupied, pale, and anxious, was dwelling upon her late conversation with her husband—filled with sympathy for his sufferings, and perplexity as to their cause—grieved at his suspicions, and filled with doubts and hesitation as to what was her best and wisest course to pursue.

To break off all intimacy with Mrs. Lenox at this moment of their re-union, in spite of his permission, nay, injunction to the contrary, seemed unnecessary, unwise: it would serve probably to justify in some degree his injurious suspicions, and might only keep alive in his mind this painful and torturing jealousy:

added to all which, it must in truth be confessed, that she felt as if the sacrifice, unless imposed by unquestionable duty, would be one too great even for her. She had tasted again of life—she had bathed in the daylight of happiness once more: her dulled and miserable being, fast sinking into that sort of apathy and cold indifference—that living death—which such an existence proves to a temperament like hers, had been called back, awakened, as it were, to brief but healthful enjoyment, by this meeting with her long-lost Lisa. Could she—ought she—must she—extinguish that light, abandon that bright day-spring which rose once more upon her, and return to the darkness and gloom in which her thoughts and feelings had been so long immured?

She could not do it: she felt that, after having once tasted again of happiness, however clouded, however imperfect, to have such happiness again totally withdrawn would be to die.

And yet how ill, how miserable had Mr. Danby looked that night when he returned from his chambers!—how ill, how worn, when he sat down to breakfast, with his papers as usual before him! She saw too well with what a painful and distracted attention the sheets were looked over, upon which, till then, his whole mind and thoughts had used to be absorbed.

Her heart bled for him. This love!—this hapless, unrequited, undying love! She had at last begun to comprehend its force, and to understand what had been the true source of the coldness, harshness, injustice, and even positive ill-humour from which she had suffered so much, and which had checked the natural growth of that affection which she was longing to offer.

“Thy word shall be a lantern to my feet.”

Her desire to do what was right had opened her eyes, and made her at length penetrate into the depths of a heart which had been till then such a discouraging enigma.

Far was she from the remotest idea of, even in thought, failing in her loyalty to such an affection: to have cherished any other than his mournful and devoted image would have outraged every feeling of her nature.

She began to appreciate the bitterness of that disappointed tenderness which had produced this long estrangement. And what heart of woman but at once forgives every unkindness flowing from such a source?

An interest altogether new began to rise within her as she reviewed their last conversation, and comprehended the excess of a love which had obtained only such a return. She recalled the generosity of his conduct, and began to wonder at her long indifference. All those trifling defects in manner and appearance which had seemed so adverse to the growth of any tender passion had been long ago forgotten under the influence of the close and sacred tie which united them. It remained only to strengthen that tie, by an interest deeper and more genial than cold esteem; and this interest was beginning imperceptibly to dawn in her breast.

She was thinking of Mr. Danby, and scarcely, in the least,

of Colonel Lenox, as she sat with her pale and meditative face by the side of her friend.

Alas! Mr. Danby, why could you not be made aware of it? What agonising tortures might you not have been spared! Yes, torture! It is not too strong a word.

Say what you will, the vehemence of a love such as his survives the short-lived hour of passion. It had become to him a second nature. The only feeling that seemed to exist in his heart was his love and his esteem for his Emilia. His love had been cruelly outraged by the conviction that it never had nor could be returned; and that it was not indifference alone, but another and invincible impression, with which he had to contend. Still, in spite of all, he had esteemed—he had even pitied her; but the late unhappy misunderstanding had destroyed his last consolation. With his fatal aptitude to suspicion, he believed that she had now intentionally deceived him, and for a purpose—the purpose of being suffered to renew her connexion with Colonel Lenox and his family. He forgot the frank and uncalled-for confession—he only dwelt upon that confidence which he believed had been withheld.

His pride—the pride of a deeply-wounded and devoted heart—forbade him to refuse to sanction, nay, drove him into the injunction to continue the acquaintance; while his heart seemed actually rending in pieces with the racking pangs of that jealousy which he would have died rather than have confessed.

His imagination, once so difficult to excite, was now all awake, and, like an unbound fury, seemed suddenly aroused only to drive him to distraction. He pictured to himself that young and handsome man as he had first seen him, for he now distinctly remembered the fond and devoted air with which he had walked by Emilia's side: her blooming, happy countenance upturned to his, while she cheerfully prattled away. He contrasted himself with such a picture—he looked upon himself almost with loathing.

And she was gone!—yes, she was gone where she should meet him, and talk to him, and smile upon him—smile upon him with those radiant, happy smiles he had then adored, but never since had seen; and she should taste felicity in *his* presence, in exchange for the melancholy misery of her home.

Unhappy—unhappy man!

He feared not for her faith. Of her virtue, suspicious as he was, he felt so secure, that a thought so injurious never once sullied his mind. It was of her heart, of her happiness, he was jealous—that heart he would have died to win—that happiness he would have gladly endured torture himself to form—that happiness which, from the first day she had been his, he had felt the deep, invincible conviction could never, never spring from him.

That thought alone had been a wretchedness at times almost too great to bear; but he had never anticipated the intolerable anguish of knowing that another was bestowing that which he so vainly, so earnestly desired to confer.

Business became insupportable this morning: he left his

chambers at an unaccustomed hour; he thought he would go home; he should be less wretchedly nervous in her presence; something she would say, or in some way she would look, so that he might find comfort.

He was walking slowly along, when, lifting up his eyes from the ground, he saw a gentleman, a remarkably handsome man, on horseback, slowly riding up Chancery Lane.

The gentleman stopped, turned his horse a little, and lifting up his head, fixed his eyes upon the house of Mr. Danby.

Mr. Danby knew him in a moment.

It was, to use the hackneyed expression—but it was almost literally as if a dagger had been struck into his heart.

That fine, handsome, military figure, upon his beautiful horse. Mr. Danby glanced at himself!

He longed to strike his clenched fist against his head—he could have torn his hair off by handfuls, and dashed himself upon the ground: extravagant as his feelings may appear, that was his instinct at the moment, and what he might almost have done had he been alone.

As it was, he suddenly turned away; and, staggering as he went along, plunged into one of the darkest lanes, and spent the day wandering like a miserable ghost amid the most dismal alleys and closest streets of that close and dismal region.

Towards evening he returned to his own house, stupified, but not consoled.

In the mean time, the beautiful little phaeton had entered the Park, and came slowly and idly up the way leading by the Serpentine; the two young ladies sat reposing in it, side by side, apparently lost in thought. Emilia is ruminating upon her husband's feelings and her own position; Lisa far less innocently employed, I am afraid.

The carriage suddenly stopped, and a gentleman on horseback spoke.

Mrs. Lenox started, blushed crimson, and with an affected laugh, cried out—

"La, Lenox, how you startled me!"

"I should think so," said he, "for you are of the colour *d'une araignée méditant des crimes*;" but, seeing Mrs. Danby in the carriage with you, I stopped to ask to be re-introduced to her, for it is a long time since we have met; and she has, in all probability, *entirely forgotten me*."

In spite of his affected indifference, there was much more feeling in his voice while he spoke the last words than he had intended—a tone of deep sorrow and deep resentment, that drove the blood vehemently through Emilia's heart.

But she only raised her head, looked up at him, and answered his salute with a serious and melancholy bow. He had allowed himself to hope for something else. He had allowed himself to hope that the history of the past—that history, inscribed in indelible characters on his own heart—would be read in the expression of her face; and that upon this, their first meeting after

their long and dreary separation, something in her voice and eye would tell him that she was still his, in spite of all the barriers that separated them—that in heart and soul at least they yet were one.

His colour changed. Wounded to the quick, he turned hastily away, the tears of pride, resentment, and disappointed tenderness rising to his eyes. That look had told him, as it was intended to tell him, that all was over for ever between them.

Not for the universe would she have wronged Mr. Danby by the slightest expression of any other feeling.

Yet grief, when she saw his fallen and disappointed countenance, a compassion the most pure and divine, melted that kindest of human hearts; she sank back in the carriage, and drew her veil over her face. Lisa, in the mean time, leaning back apparently passive, sat watching them both. The little scene had been perfectly understood by her; for she was as quick and penetrating, when she took the trouble to observe, as she was usually heedless of everything.

She saw with a feeling of bitter resentment the emotion betrayed by her husband's countenance, and with an admiration and esteem she would have found it almost impossible to express, the grave serenity preserved by Emilia. She knew how little in such a situation she should have been capable of exercising the same self-control, and of thus preserving, in all its bright and unblemished purity, her good faith to her husband and to her friend.

Alas! that one so formed to reverence, almost to worship virtue, had not been better schooled to the habitual practice of it!

She took up her friend's cold hand, pressed it, and kissed it!

Then, looking across the Park, over the green turf of which Colonel Lenox was slowly retiring, she sighed bitterly.

"If he had cared for my feelings in the least degree," she could not but say within herself, "he never would have exposed me to a scene like this."

She felt wounded, insulted, jealous, irritated! but it ought to be taken as a proof of the natural goodness and justice of her temper, that not the slightest feeling of ill-will was excited by the secretly-dreaded rival. She loved Emilia well, and she saw her honour might be trusted.

"Do you think him changed?" at last she said. "He told me last night, or pretended to tell me, that you were so much altered he should not in the least have known you. Indeed he affected not to know you; but that is nothing. He never cares how much he dupes me; but he had better have a care—the duping may not always be on one side alone."

"But I *am* greatly changed, my Lisa," said Emilia, with a sigh. "Why should he attempt to deceive you in such a trifling matter as whether this poor face was aged and withered or not?"

"Should you have known him?"

"Anywhere—everywhere—and yet he *is* changed."

"Changed!" cried Mrs. Lenox; "I believe he *is* changed!

You think you are changed, and so you may be—in *looks*; but who but a *man* would care for that? You are not changed in heart," she added, raising her hand, and kissing it twice. "In you I see again, in spite of this Chancery Lane cheek, all I loved, honoured, and revered in those happy, innocent days of the Oaks. But in him!—oh! he has kept his beauty, that he is so proud of, and his fine gallant bearing, and all that, which charmed me so in days gone by!—but *nothing* else is the same! He is not unlike that Colonel Lenox in one thing, but in everything. I have passed through these horrible metamorphoses by slow degrees; and it is only when I look back that I am aware how little—how nothing—is left of the former man! But you, who can see at once the two extremes, will never credit me that it is the man; and therefore," said she, attempting to assume a tone of levity, though her cheek was crimson and her voice trembling, "and therefore I am not in the least jealous of you; for, to say nothing of virtue, your good faith to your friend, and to the delectable Mr. Danby, and all that sort of stuff—I count upon your partialities for *le feu* Colonel Lenox. I am sure," added she, with asperity, "I, who so wildly, foolishly, madly loved the one, am beginning quite to forget to care for the other."

"Nay, my dearest Lisa—" said Emilia, in her old remonstrating tone.

"Oh, nonsense!—don't talk to me!" she cried, with increasing bitterness. "The man you have married may be ugly, may be stupid, may be ill-tempered, may be odd; but he's neither a coxcomb nor a fool—and he loves you. Oh, Emilia! treasure a husband's love! What is the whole world to woman without it? Your husband is a plain piece of home-spun enough; but he loves his wife, after all. Mine is much too fine a gentleman to do any such vulgar thing."

Emilia's heart responded in silence to this reflection. After a few moments, she said—

"What you say, my dearest Lisa, is quite true. A constant heart and an honest affection is indeed a priceless treasure; and yet—"

"Treasure it! treasure it!" cried Lisa. "The time was when I thought little of such things. I thought myself so secure of the love of all the world, that I little heeded who did or who did not care for me. His indifference, his barbarous indifference, has taught me how to value the inestimable prize."

Emilia pressed her hand with a sympathy she had not experienced before. She had not imagined that Lisa possessed so much feeling. She at once grieved for her friend's anger, and was filled with compassion for Colonel Lenox. She could not help fearing that the volatile and impetuous Lisa had, by her own ill-judged violence and caprices, forfeited the treasure she now so dearly valued; and yet she felt that his coldness and carelessness were unpardonable towards one by nature endowed with such good and generous feelings—such quick sensibilities and so affectionate a heart—she felt that indulgence, firmness, gentle remonstrance, and careful guidance, might have made of

this young and loving creature all that was charming and good.

She sighed, while she reflected upon her friend's fate and her own—the one repulsed in her endeavours to supply the want of a more passionate devotion by affectionate duty, the other deserted for that very passion's fault.

The carriage proceeded slowly by the water, and now entered the Wood.

Emilia felt the little hand she held twitching and fluttering with a sort of nervous impatience, as a very handsome and elegant man, lounging upon a most beautiful horse, suffered the carriage to overtake him, and bowed to Mrs. Lenox with an air, as it were, of suppressed but deep and melancholy interest.

Emilia was struck with the astonishing beauty and sweetness of the countenance, and asked her companion who that was?

"Which?—who?" was Lisa's answer.

"That gentleman we have just passed."

"Oh!" she cried, colouring deeply, "I did not particularly observe him."

Emilia at once shocked and sorry, shook her head.

"Oh, Lisa!"

"Good Heavens!" said she, pettishly, "do you think I am going to observe the whole Park?"

The gentleman, walking his horse, now overtook them again.

"A lovely day!" he began. "The Park was never to me so enchanting before. I thought I had become wearied of everything upon earth! I little expected to see so very old a thing suddenly invested, as it were, with a new enchantment."

"Very fortunate," said Lisa, "particularly as such things as beautiful days are not so very rare, but that it is to be hoped the enchantment may often be repeated."

"I ask it only—I ask nothing else beneath this sun—to make life one wilderness of bliss to me! But such days do *not* return."

And he sighed.

And she looked down and began to play with the lace of her cloak; while Emilia, displeased and surprised, but scarcely comprehending why these few sentences should produce such an effect, looked from one to the other.

The Duke—for of course it was he—returned the look with one of those haughty and impertinent ways of regarding a person from head to foot which seems to say—

"And who on earth may you be that presume to question or interfere with me?"

"Mrs. Danby," said Lisa, introducing them, thinking only of herself, and neither observing nor understanding the expression of his face. He made a haughty sort of half-respectful, half-ironical bow. He did not want to be introduced to all Mrs. Lenox's possible acquaintance, much as he admired Mrs. Lenox herself. He would stoop, like the falcon, from his high sphere to seize his prey, but with the intention of bearing it aloft in his talons; he had no idea of associating with the things below. He was, in fact, the proudest man in London, and would have

regarded himself as at too great a distance from both to measure the interval which separated Mrs. Lenox and Mrs. Danby, had not his interest in the one elevated her, in his opinion, far above her ordinary sphere.

"Won't you get out and walk?" said he to Mrs. Lenox; "it's very pleasant and fine."

Lisa made a gesture of consent.

"But you promised me five o'clock," half whispered Emilia.

"It's only half-past four now. I must have one turn. Dear Emilia, we have neither of us set our foot upon the green turf for ages. We shall be at home in a quarter of an hour I'm sure."

"I should be very happy," said Emilia, hesitatingly; "but, you know, you were so good as to promise to return me—"

"Oh!" said the Duke, "if the lady's engagements are of so very urgent and pressing a nature, would it not be possible for your carriage to take her home while you indulged your inclination for a little exercise in Kensington Gardens? I assure you they are divine."

Lisa hesitated.

The Duke was more pressing.

She turned to Emilia—

"You could go home by yourself, and the carriage might fetch me afterwards. It really is so sweet!"

"Delicious!" said the Duke, dismounting, and giving his horse to his groom, and preparing to hand her from the carriage with alacrity.

There was something in all this that Emilia could not quite understand; but she felt an increasing dislike to the idea of leaving Lisa alone in company with this man.

"I will not give your horses and servants the trouble upon my account—I will walk with you."

"How kind of you!" said the heedless and good-natured Lisa.

"I will only take one single turn, and then your dear old ancient shall get his antediluvian dinner."

They walked once, they walked twice, they walked thrice.

"I am sorry, my dear Mrs. Lenox," at last Emilia began; "but," looking anxious, "it is nearly six o'clock."

"Is it possible!" cried Lisa. "Oh, I really do beg yours and your old man's pardon! Do you know, Duke, this fair friend of mine has got a barbarian of a husband who dines at five o'clock, and who will kill her, like Bluebeard, if she does not come home! so we must be gone directly."

The young Duke, seldom accustomed to be treated in this easy manner, even by those whose chains he professed to wear, looked half-vexed, half-amused, half-charmed, as they returned to the little carriage, which stood waiting for them under the trees.

"To Chancery Lane!" said Lisa, as they seated themselves.

The Duke elevated his eyebrows with a wondering stare, gave an ironical kind of bow, and they were gone.

"That was the man," said Emilia, "that I asked the name of."

"Oh, was it? It's the Duke of C——. Is he not handsome?"

"I think he has a very disagreeable expression."

"Oh, you really do! But, I can assure you, he is reckoned the very handsomest man in Europe."

"I am sorry for Europe."

"What do you mean? Why, you can't but think him handsome, Emily!"

"As far as features go, perhaps," said her friend.

"And such a love of a figure on horseback! Did you see how he sat his horse?"

"I did not much notice it."

"I dare say," said Lisa, petulantly, "that you noticed *another* man's riding a great deal more."

"Nay, Lisa, if I am to understand you right, that is not spoken like yourself," said Emilia. "You know how I disliked this sort of hints and allusions when, at least, they were innocent: do not, my dear Lisa, let me be grieved by them now they are no longer so."

Lisa was silenced, but not corrected. She was vexed at herself, for her conscience was ill at ease, and vexed at Emilia for being better than she was. She said not one word more till they arrived before that dull, melancholy house in Chancery Lane; then, as she saw the door of what appeared to her the most gloomy and sordid of prisons open, and beheld Emilia, with a troubled and anxious look, preparing to descend and enter, her good heart got the better of her ill humour; and, shaking her affectionately by the hand, she promised to come and fetch her again to-morrow.

"Not to-morrow," said Emilia.

"Well, but—now do! and, instead of going round the Park, we will go and play with the children: you have scarcely looked at my children. Ah, Emilia!"—for a difficulty was always sure to create an interest with Lisa—"if you will come, I will promise to spend the whole morning with you and the children. I will, Emilia, indeed, though I never spent such a morning in my life! I don't know how it is—some way, one never sees one's children; and mine (dear little fools!) seem so glad when I can come to them!"

Emilia still hesitated: she felt that it was too soon to leave her father again so long alone.

"I have *my* child, too, at home," she said, with a half-melancholy smile, "who is glad to have me also. It must not be to-morrow, dear Lisa—let it be the next day."

"Oh!" said Lisa, throwing herself back in the carriage, "that is far too distant a period for me to calculate upon. I shall send the carriage for you to-morrow."

And she drove on, leaving Mrs. Danby to enter her house.

CHAPTER XL.

Nature did her so much right,
 As she scorns the help of art,
 In as many virtues dight
 As e'er yet embraced a heart.
 So much good so sorely tried,
 Some for less were deified.—W. BROWNE.

THE clocks were striking six as the door closed after her; she tried to hope it was five, but six it was.

She went hastily up to her little sitting-room: her father and Mr. Danby were both there.

Her father was rocking himself up and down in his chair, almost crying for his dinner.

Mr. Danby looked both hurt and offended.

"I am excessively sorry, Mr. Danby," said she, going up to him. "Mrs. Lenox promised faithfully that she would bring me home by five o'clock; but she met an acquaintance of hers, a gentleman—the Duke of C——, I believe—and he tempted her to walk, and I—"

"Make no excuses," said he, gloomily; "I cannot wonder that you are sorry to come home."

"It's too bad of you, Emilia—I must say that; it's very unkind and careless of you to us both: but I see how it's going to be—you are going to be out all day, and only come home when you can't help it."

"My dear father, pray don't be displeased with me; indeed I could not possibly help it to-day. I am so sorry that you and Mr. Danby did not go to dinner!"

"It shall be so in future," said her husband, anticipating, in a sort of gloomy despair, the total destruction of all that had given so sweet a charm to the short intervals of home-life snatched from his chambers. "We will not wait, and then you need not come home for your father's sake;—you can do as you like then."

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Danby, I like to come home for the sake of others besides my father! I am very sorry," she added, coming up to him with persevering sweetness—"extremely sorry! It must be so annoying to you to have the regularity of your life disturbed! Will you not forgive me this once? I am sure you will!"

His heart ached as he looked at her—ached at this sweetness, which had in it something more affectionate and unrestrained than he had ever seen in her before.

Alas for his suspicious temper! He attributed to a desire to flatter and to blind him what arose from the change which had taken place in her own feelings, and the cheerfulness of her revived spirits. A certain shyness, a certain sincerity of temper, which had restrained her expressions of regard while she had felt they might be false, was giving way before the new interest he was beginning to inspire.

He only shook his head, and turned away.

She saw that he did not believe her.

She was more hurt than she had ever been before: he was beginning to possess the power to hurt her. He saw this; but, quite incapable of estimating the force of a cause so refined, attributed it to the power of those new influences with which she was surrounded, and which were only still further alienating her heart from him.

The figure, indeed, of that military and handsome man, sitting upon his horse at his door, was for ever before him. He felt that she must hate and despise him—he hated and despised himself.

Never had his discouragement and despondency been so complete: he was quite spirit-broken; he contemned his own weakness, but he had long ceased to struggle against it.

There she sat still, with that countenance of goodness, simplicity, and truth, for which he had adored her; and he was regarding it all the while as only a deceitful mask, that hid the treacherous attempt to blind, to deceive him. Every gentle word, every kind look, was bitter as wormwood to his soul: he believed she was only smiling to betray.

It was impossible that it should be otherwise; he had ceased to hope it; he had abandoned himself to his fate. She had loved that young and handsome soldier once—she loved him still. She could not but love him. Could he, with all his disadvantages, bear a comparison such as this?

The plate, with his untasted dinner, was pushed away; he drank a few glasses of water, but could not swallow a morsel. Again she looked upon him with concern—again she ventured to speak.

“Dear Mr. Danby, what is the matter? You are ill.”

“I have got a headache,” said he, shortly. “I would rather be let alone.”

She was again silenced, and turned and devoted herself to her father. It was not without difficulty that she restored good humour there. She had so accustomed him to have every wish consulted, that he could not bear the slightest disappointment. Her persevering sweetness, her patience, her good temper, her gentle endeavours to overcome his perverse and tiresome humours, were not unnoticed by Mr. Danby.

His attention was arrested: he watched, but it was only to turn his head again away with a heavy sigh.

He usually went to his chambers after dinner, often before the cloth was removed; but this day, for the first time, he seemed fastened to his chair. He wanted spirits even to move; he was perfectly subdued, and incapable of exertion.

She, as usual, attended her father into the drawing-room, and placed him in his arm-chair to take his accustomed nap; but, not hearing the house-door shut after Mr. Danby, she came down again, conquering the little irritation his manner and repulses had occasioned.

He was still sitting in his chair, absorbed in the most black

and gloomy reverie; he just lifted up his head as she entered the room, and then resumed his attitude without seeming to notice her.

She came up so kindly, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and said,—

"My dear Mr. Danby, you are ill. Tell me what is the matter."

He gently moved his shoulder, so as to throw her hand off—looked up in her face, but did not speak.

"I am sure I have hurt and offended you. I am so extremely sorry. I may have given you cause before. I fear I often have; but to-day, believe me, it was not my fault. I would not be so negligent, so disrespectful to you, for the world, as not to conform to your hours. Indeed, indeed," she added, and the tears stood in her eyes, "indeed I would not, Mr. Danby!"

He looked at her again.

"You are very kind—but it is too late."

"Too late? What is too late?"

"To impose upon me!" he cried, with a sudden burst of passion.

She started back, wounded at the injurious suspicion; then her candid and generous heart whispered that there had been a cause. Had not her previous involuntary indifference laid the sad foundation of all this bitter feeling?

She came forward, and said gently, but firmly,—

"I do not know what I have ever done, Mr. Danby, to give you reason, with justice, to suspect me of any desire to impose upon you, or upon any one. I have always endeavoured, whatever and many faults I have had, to be truthful and sincere. This is the first time I ever was accused of the attempt to deceive. I do not deserve it now. I see," she said, with some emotion, "I see, by the expression of your face, that you do not yet believe me; therefore it is useless to say more. Time, and time only, can undeceive you; time can and will prove the injustice of your present feelings. To time and your own righteous judgment I appeal."

And she turned to leave the room.

"Emilia!" said he.

"Did you speak?" said she, returning.

He took her hand, gazing wistfully in her face—then dropped it—turned away—covered his face with his hands—and the big, large tears rolled through his fingers.

Again she was deeply moved; but she did not know what to say or to do. She stood silent, hesitating, and uncertain.

He soon recovered himself—seemed ashamed of the weakness he had betrayed—and, rising hastily, swallowed a glass of water, and saying, "It is late; I ought already to have been in my chambers," left the room.

Such scenes as these acted with a strange and new power upon Emilia's heart.

The emotions betrayed by her husband—his doubts—his

anguish—his struggles with himself—the deep and devoted affection that was betrayed, through all the harshness and uncertainties of his behaviour, fixed her attention and interest upon him at the dangerous moment of her former lover's return.

The intensity and sincerity of Mr. Danby's feelings—the strange contrast between the strength of his character, the coldness of his temper, and the weakness caused by his passion for herself—his sufferings—his broken voice—his faltering gestures—his failing health and appetite—all filled her with a deep and real concern, to which any sentiment that Colonel Lenox might once have inspired seemed, in comparison, but as an illusion and a dream.

This was real life—the other, dear as it had been, but a romance, after all. She began to wonder at her long indifference to a heart so devoted—to a character so simple and so true. Now that she had seen Colonel Lenox again—now that his image had left that region of remembrance in which all is softened to an enchantment the most dangerous—now that the living, actual man had resumed his place among the real, actual things of every day life—it might, perhaps, be almost difficult to make you believe how much the force of her long and fatal prepossession abated. His image, no longer enshrined in a secret chamber of her heart, into which, shuddering was apprehension at her own feelings, she had feared even to look, was now presented, as it were, in the broad light of the open day; and the magical influence he had so long exercised seemed at an end.

The cherished recollection had been as of something sacred, almost divine—perfect in ideal and in moral beauty. They met, and she was disappointed in him.

Now musing, in the solitude of her small chamber, upon all the rapidly-succeeding changes of this eventful day, she contrasted the high and fashionable bearing of Colonel Lenox—his fine face and beautiful, though somewhat hard, expression of countenance—his indifference and unkindness to Lisa—with Mr. Danby's simple and unpretending appearance—ungraceful and plain, it is true, but instinct with the character of the man—with his intense though misguided sensibility, and his devoted and single passion; and there was something in the truth and simplicity of the one, with all its waywardness, contrasted with the polished but somewhat conventional elegance of the other, which struck her forcibly, and in a far different manner from that which the unhappy Mr. Danby imagined.

"Look upon ~~this~~ portrait, and on that."

She had done so; and, to her own astonishment, she found that her strongest interest was with the pale, discoloured picture of her husband.

You have felt this, no doubt, in a gallery of art. The more florid portrait, drawn by some modern hand, with all its fresh and beautiful colouring, has been forsaken; and you have been led, as by an invincible attraction, to some plain, pale, faded head, full of the characters of truth and simplicity, painted by a Rembrandt, and hanging in a corner.

The first time Emilia felt this—the first time the truth broke upon that heart, so long distracted with the idea of the fatal, invincible, and almost guilty prepossession, which seemed to have acted like some dreadful magical power to chill and falsify every sentiment—she sank down upon her knees, and thanked God for her deliverance with fervent tears.

The happiness of that moment repaid her for all her dutiful and virtuous efforts at emancipation. At length, and for the first time for these long, long, mournful years, she began to feel her duty and her inclination were leading one way—that the secret feelings of her heart were such as she might dare to indulge—that the long, wearisome task of repression was at an end, and that her genuine, untaught sentiments were such as she need not tremble at.

I wish I could paint her to you, rising from her knees, released from the dreadful apprehension of hidden wrong; bright, radiant, and beautiful; her heart at liberty, her fancy free; the noble, ardent, energetic Emilia restored to herself.

It was like the change from this weary life of clay to another and a better. She has fought the good fight, and she has vanquished; and it is given to her, the high reward is given, to *love*. Yes, she loves him,—not with the tumultuous, vain passion of her youth, but with the deep, sincere, and heartfelt affection which moral worth inspires.

She loves Mr. Danby—she feels that she does.

She is invested with a panoply. All her difficulties—all her anxieties—all the weary desolations of her life—have vanished. The sun has risen, the shadows of the night are fleeing fast away—all is clear, bright, serene within her soul. She feels an angel's love for them all.

For him! that strange and withered man, who has so long suffered, though successful. For him, the long-beloved, embittered by his disappointment. For her, that mistaken and misguided creature, shipwrecked in her best hopes, for her sake. Her heart embraces them all! Her soul is large enough for all! She will—she can suffice, devoted as she is, to make them all happy.

It is true everything is still in confusion—one entangled labyrinth of perplexed and wayward feeling; but so it shall not be for ever: time, healing, beneficent time, shall clear away her husband's suspicions—shall awaken a husband's tenderness in the chilled and resentful heart of Lenox—shall restore the lovely Lisa to her better self.

Strong in her own feelings, she looks forward cheerfully. All, all shall come right at last; even in this world, the web under *His* blessing shall be disentangled.

She fell asleep in this paradise of excited thought, and dreamed of her husband and her mother.

When he entered her room, and looked, as was his wont, upon her slumbering face before he extinguished his candle, he could not but be struck with the sort of rapturous joy—the flushing colour—the restored youth—that like a glory brightened what had been so long sunken, pale, and sad.

But, alas! he little understood it. He—it was but natural that he should—mistook the cause; he attributed it to that return which had, indeed, effected the wondrous change—but in a manner how different from that which the husband in his gloomy despair surmised! He stood some time gazing in a sort of wondering admiration, but as upon something that was no longer his—some bright, inestimable treasure lost to him for ever. And then with a sigh, amounting to a groan, he turned away.

Ah, sweet Emilia! Is your bright hope and confidence well founded; or must you, like others, wait another and a better world before repose shall bless your anxious pilgrimage?

CHAPTER XLI.

The stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern;
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.—BYRON.

THE breakfast the next morning was more silent and melancholy than ever. Mr. Danby, sunk back in his chair, seemed filled with gloomy thoughts; while Emilia, grieved and perplexed, endeavoured in vain, by every kind of affectionate attention, to divert his melancholy. It was evident he was ill, indeed so ill, that when he rose up as usual to go to his chambers, he tottered as he walked across the room.

She again went up to him—again laid that gentle hand upon his arm.

“My dear Mr. Danby, do for once leave these tiresome chambers to take care of themselves: you are really ill—stay at home for one single morning of your life with me. Indeed, you had better. I have never had an opportunity of exercising my skill upon you, but I am a very good leech, I assure you. Let me feel your pulse—let me get something for you. Indeed you are ill.”

“I am not very well,” said he, sadly, passing his hand over his forehead, and suffering her to lead him back to his chair; “but I shall be better in half an hour.”

He seemed pleased with her attentions—the charm of her kind and sweet manner was to him irresistible; but distrust and suspicion were gnawing at his heart—every action taking a jaundiced hue. His exquisite sensibility to any proof of affection on her part only seemed to increase his distress:—

“For, oh, what damned minutes counts he o’er
Who doubts, yet doats—distrusts, yet fondly loves!”

There is a knock heard below.

The maid half opened the parlour-door.

“There’s a gentleman’s servant, ma’am, with a note for you.”

And a small, delicate note is in the girl’s hand.

Of course Emilia knew who it was from, and guessed what

it contained. She went up to the girl, took the note from her and instead of returning, went out of the room, and up stairs into the sitting-room, to read and answer it.

The note was in few words:—

"Now, do come, Emilia, to-day. I want to be alone with you—I want to have you—I want to tell you—there is something—Oh! Emilia. I don't think, too, my baby is quite well; do come to me! I shall not go out at all; we will spend the morning with those little cubs, if you will come. I want to get fond of home—I do indeed, Emilia—I shall, if you will help me; do come! I shall send the carriage for you at two."

"DEAREST LISA,—I cannot come to-day. Mr. Danby is not well, and I do not like to leave him. To tell you the truth—but I think I will not tell it on paper, because you are wicked, and it might make you laugh; but I think I ought to stay at home to-day. You know such dissipation as I have had for the last two days is a very rare thing in this quiet quarter; I shall quite forfeit my reputation for goodness if I am not more prudent; but if you wish to see me, and can be constant till to-morrow, I will come to you."

She returned to her husband's side, and said nothing of the contents of the note. She did not wish to seem to make a merit of her little sacrifice; she brought her work in her hand, put out her little work-table, opened her work-box, and began to arrange what she had set her heart upon working—a cap for Lisa's baby.

Her heart had yearned to these little children as soon as she had seen them. Such blessings had been denied to herself—blessings so supreme, which have consoled many a disappointed heart for the indifference and careless rudeness of its first beloved! The privation had terribly increased the loneliness and melancholy of her situation. A childless marriage, under the best circumstances, is a melancholy thing—in this it was desolation.

These children so interesting and so lovely, occupied her thoughts much; she longed to see more of them—to caress and love these little beings; and she had pleased herself with the idea of *doing* something for them—that first impulse of an active temper for those it loves.

Trifles are indeed to the jealous most weighty things.

When she brought her work and sat down by him, she was grieved at the increasing gloom of his countenance. She endeavoured to amuse him by cheerful talk. She did everything in her power to please him; but her voice, her looks,—everything about her—seemed only to increase his irritation. He was so weak as to be suspicious of the little note he had seen given; to be hurt that it had not been communicated to him; but he was too proud to confess the power of such a trifle over his temper, and still master enough of himself to conceal the cause of his additional ill-humour.

At last he said,—

"I should be very sorry to keep you at home, Mrs. Danby. Why do you not go out as usual to visit your friend? At least, let me not be any restraint upon your movements; that is the last thing I would wish to be."

"I assure you I had no intention of going out this morning; and, even if I had intended it, I would not leave you to-day—the only day, perhaps, of my life that I might flatter myself that you wanted me," said she, trying to smile.

He was still thinking of the note; he was hurt, he was suspicious—why could she not have mentioned its contents to him? But for the world he would not have asked a question upon the subject.

He wanted her to speak of it; he fancied all the most irritating reasons for her silence; the cheerfulness of her manner only provoked him the more; he could not endure to see her look so happy, and another the cause. His temper got the better of him. •

He rose hastily from his chair, and saying, "This room is insufferable to me," rose and went out of it.

And so she spent the day she had devoted to him in a sort of cheerless, discouraged mood; the bright hopes of the preceding evening yielding fast to this obstinate and unreasonable determination. She began to fear that a temper so irrecoverably suspicious could never be corrected; that the time was indeed past, and jealousy so irremediably established in her husband's heart that nothing she could do would avail

So passed away many days.

Emilia's time was divided between Lisa and her duties—such duties as she had to perform—which were soon completed. Her father required the attention of an hour or two, and that was sufficient; for he amused himself with some childish occupation or another, or, attended by his faithful servant, might have been seen slowly creeping along the streets and alleys of the great city, gazing about him unmeaningly, yet seeming to derive gratification from mere change of object.

As for Mr. Danby, he was now less at home than ever; he only appeared at meals, and, these despatched, returned immediately to his chambers. He spoke very little to Emilia—never, indeed, addressed her but when something rendered it necessary, and seemed, in a sort of bitter desperation of feeling, almost to have given her up altogether.

And so he proposed, and so he thought he had. With his usual neglect of self-government, he had suffered himself to be again entirely the slave of his sensations. He was discouraged—he was wounded, jealous, and miserable; and he yielded passively to all these wretched feelings. He made no effort with himself; still less did he turn his attention upon her; still less did he endeavour to weigh the force of his suspicions against her words and actions—his distrust against her kind and gentle ways—his jealousy against her sincerity and truth. He was wretched; and he abandoned himself to his wretchedness without a struggle.

Look upon him in his chambers; there he sits at his desk, his countenance clouded, his eye dim,—still poring, as usual, over his papers: but he does not seem to catch their meaning

with his accustomed perspicuity; his ideas are no longer lucid, his views no longer penetrating; he feels this, and his hand is passed over his aching brow—but in vain—the whole man is changed. Then he rises, and walks up and down his little darksome cell; then he resumes his seat, takes up the paper, endeavours to comprehend its intricacies as he was wont to do, and lays it down again with a heavy sigh.

Then he takes up that small, discoloured, folded sheet—holds it in his hand—gazes intently upon it—shakes his head—sighs—lays it down again, and resumes the consideration of the case submitted.

The Iago of this second Othello was as different from the Ancient of the wondrous story as poor Mr. Danby from the wild and romantic soldier whose hair-breadth 'scapes, even at the cannon's mouth, had won the imaginative heart of the daughter of Venice.

Mrs. Danby, malicious, vindictive, jealous, and most ignorant both of human nature and of human life, was partly the dupe of her own suspicious temper—of her vile habit of thinking *all* evil, and partly the slave of her dislike to Emilia,—a dislike that not one single action on the part of her daughter-in-law had ever justified, but which seemed to arise partly from that jealousy with which, as a selfish mother, she would have regarded any one who shared with her in the heart of her son, and partly from that strange species of enmity which characters so simple, free, and high-minded, seem instinctively to inspire in natures of this description. There is a power, a force, a genuine unbought superiority about them, which the pride and the bitterness of such tempers cannot endure. They are overborne, they know not how—troubled, they know not why—by the simple energy of these true and generous beings.

Certain it is, that Mrs. Danby cherished the most profound and unreasonable dislike for Emilia; and her poisonous insinuations were gently but unremittingly distilled into the ear of her unhappy son, who had, as you too well know, inherited the suspicious bias of her natural temper.

I advise every one to beware of a leaning to the faults or vices of his family. The mysterious power of hereditary dispositions ought never to be forgotten by him who is employed in disciplining his own heart, or has to do with disciplining the hearts of other men.

These is little doubt but that Emilia would have triumphed at last, that the jealous irritation of her husband would soon have yielded to the invincible power of truth, and that the affectionate interest she had begun to feel would soon have made its way to his perceptions, changing his despondency and his distrust into the purest satisfaction and the most rapturous happiness, had it not been for the fatal influence of a mother's faults reacting upon the answering faults of her own son.

But thus was it.

Once more he is sitting in the old drawing-room in Charlotte Street. There is no fire now, and the blinds are all down, to

prevent what little sun there is from shining upon the paper and carpet, and consequently cheering and enlivening the room.

He has walked up to see his mother, according to his practice on a Sunday morning, while Emilia and her father are at church. She is kneeling before her Creator, praying for him, her husband—for his welfare in this world and the next; for her father, for herself, for all the world; and lastly, for her whom she cannot but feel is her enemy—that her heart may be softened, that her good qualities may not be forgotten, that she too may share, sooner or later, in the blessing of that peace which fadeth not away: and while she is thus employed, her poor childish father kneels by her side, repeating his prayers and responses by rote. But they shall reach heaven, nevertheless. She feels this with a tender faith and joy.

While she is thus melting, and softening, and purifying her own spirit, how are the husband and mother employed?

He has come in with his usual—

"Well, mother, how are you to-day?" has taken off his hat, laid it upon the settee, and placed himself in a chair by the side of the table.

The answer is—

"Well enough I am, but I am sure I may ask you how you are to-day? Why, son, you grow thinner and thinner, and look more and more wretched, and older and older, every day you come to see me."

"Do I?" said he. "Yes, I believe I do. I am growing old in years; but I am an old man of my years."

"And you ought to take care of that, for your wife, it seems, has taken quite a new lease. I never saw her look so young or so well in my life. Now, I suppose, I see her as she looked when you so foolishly ran your head into love of her. Well, it's a pity she should have almost worn herself to death with fretting; but now she's got among her grand folk again, she'll be quite herself, I conclude."

"Yes," said he, gloomily, "*you* have."

"I thought so. Well, son, we have all our misfortunes, but this is the last misfortune I thought would ever have happened in our family."

"What?" said he.

"To have a Danby pointed at by the folks as a dupe and a poor good-natured ninny," said his mother. "The Danbys have been a stiff race enough, I'm told, till now."

She thought more of this than he did. His unhappiness arose at least from a more generous source. His suspicions and feelings were of a more refined nature.

"I know nothing of *the folks*, as you call them, mother. They may say what they will," said he. "I have never made her happy—I have not the power to make her happy. I was an idiot and a fool to suppose that I could. She's happy now—that must be enough for me."

Mrs. Danby took a pinch of snuff, with a most expressive and meaning air,

"Well, son, you *are* a good husband."

The door opened, and Susan appeared. She had a bandbox in her hand, and she said—

"Missus, I am going to church, and I shall go by Chancery Lane to leave this bandbox there. Have you any cominands, sir?"

"Say I shall not come home to-day for dinner. I shall dine with my mother. Will you have me, ma'am?"

"You know, son, how glad I am to have you, as you call it: it's a rare enough favour now-a-days, Matthew. But what have you got in that bandbox, Susan, and what are you taking it to Chancery Lane for?"

"Bless you! madam, what *does* it signify what I have got in the bandbox? No treason, I can tell you."

"But what can you be taking down to Chancery Lane?—anything for my daughter-in-law? What do they send her things here for?"

"Oh, la! madam, don't you mind that. It's a mistake between the two Mrs. Danbys."

"Perhaps it's no mistake, and the thing's for me. What is in the bandbox, Susan?"

"Why, if you must know," said Susan, who was a very woman, and longing, after all, to tell what she knew she had better have kept to herself, "it's a new bonnet—and such a pretty bonnet!—my stars! *You*—I should like to see *you* in such a gossamery thing."

"Let us see it, Susan," said the old lady, "at all events;" and Susan, opening the bandbox, displayed what was in truth a very elegant but very simple bonnet; but, simple as it was, certainly very unlike anything Emilia had been of late in the habit of wearing.

"Humph!" said Mrs. Danby.

"Humph! Well!" replied Susan, "and where's the harm of her having a pretty bonnet, I trow? I'm sure she's young and pretty enough to become the best bonnet in the land; and, for my part, I've often wished that she dressed and made more of herself; but she's so simple-like; she never seemed to care what she put on."

"She begins to care *now*, however," said Mrs. Danby, with emphasis. Her son, who had sat silently listening to this scene, started at the remark, and his eyes flashed.

"And why should not she?" cried Susan. "To be sure, now she gets sometimes out of that rusty-fusty Chancery Lane, in which she looked for all the world like a rose in a beer-cellar, she must have something decent to put on; you would not have her **riding**, day after day, with that beautiful fairy queen, who, every time I see her, has a new summat on her head, in the same **old** bonnet for ever?—why, it would be a shame and a disgrace to us all."

"I wish the shame and the disgrace may not lie in her old bonnet, Susan."

"I don't know what you mean, ma'am: and if my young

master—sir, if you're both of you thinking of the expense—why, that's the shame—and I'll pay for it myself, rather than she shan't have it, that I will!" said the indulged old servant, putting the bonnet into the box, covering it carefully up, and preparing to walk away with her *bargain*.

"Ay, ay!" said Mrs. Danby, "you're always so much in the right, to be *sure*; and I suppose the next thing will be, you'll be going to defend all this gadding and running about all the morning long—a new thing *quite* in our family."

"It's not all morning long, nor any such thing; for, first and foremost, she puts her house in order; and next she looks after that poor ninny of a father of hers, as if he was the first prince in the land, and hadn't been the ruin of her, like; and next, and aftermost, she's always at home to her husband's dinner. And why, if you please, isn't a young lady like her to go and have the air in them Parks, as she's been used to, as I have heard? I hope nobody's going for to deny her that, poor thing! it's little enough of pleasure that she's had since she first darkened master's door; and I hope he's not going for to begrudge her this little outing, and which costs nothing, like, ma'am?"

"Well, as to the cost, Susan, that, perhaps, is not so easily settled; but go away to church, and take the bonnet out of my sight—such things make me sick!"

And Susan turned away and departed, shutting the door after her.

To be so disturbed by a mere bonnet! He was beginning to hate himself.

They both sat silent some minutes; then that bad old woman began again with—

"And I hope you like *that*, son?"

"What?" said he, endeavouring to conquer these feelings, for the littleness of which he despised himself.

"What! Is that an answer? Well, I've done. In my day, women dressed to please their husbands; it's new to me when they go and take their husbands' money to fig themselves out for other men. Go, go, and read the chapter of Proverbs, son. Well, lack-a-day, lack-a-day!"

"Mother," at last he said, "all these hints and inuendoes irritate me beyond measure. Have you anything against my wife with which I am unacquainted? Is there anything more than what I knew long ago?"

"You knew long ago that she didn't care a feather for you—that's long been plain. You saw plain enough that she was fretting and pining herself to death, and wouldn't be pleased, do what we all of us could. Well, all that's old news. But now she's happy and content enough, and she's blooming like a rose, and gay as Queen Dalilah herself; and though I didn't like her for her ill-conditioned pining and fretting, and so forth, I like her the less in her bloom and her glory. I *do*, son—but you may like her all the better, if you please."

But Susan's honest perception of the truth was never altogether without effect.

He was thinking, for the first time, whether all *had* been done to please her that could have been done; and whether it was not natural that a being so young and fair should love the sunshine and the Parks better than Chancery Lane? But the thought brought little comfort; it only added strength to that sort of distracting uncertainty with which he suffered, nay, insisted upon her going out almost every day, under the deep and settled conviction that he was committing an indulgence which was ruinous to his peace.

He loved her so well that he could not bear to deny her a pleasure, however dangerous. His indifference and negligence in procuring this sort of enjoyments for her before had arisen from absolute want of thought.

His mother's reflections, and the apparition of the elegant bonnet, only seemed to bring in a more lively manner before his mind's eye that picture which ever haunted his imagination—*Emilia happy, and not through him.*

And yet he was radically and greatly generous—he could not bear to refuse her this happiness.

Crime! He esteemed her far too much to fear that. The rest was only the immense, the incalculable, the last vast sacrifice to his heart's idol.

| You, too, are beginning to love, Mr. Danby!

CHAPTER XLII.

But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of Conscience.—WORDSWORTH.

EMILIA meanwhile—her happy anticipations at an end, every day more and more discouraged by the increasing coldness of his manner, every day becoming more timid, more distrustful of herself, less confident of pleasing where she so sincerely wished to please—gave more and more of her time to her friend.

Mrs. Lenox came almost every day to Chancery Lane, now in one carriage, now in another, to carry Emilia abroad—partly from the genuine kindness and good nature of her disposition, partly from the absolute necessity she felt for her society. The idea of the friend she loved so dearly immersed in what appeared to her as the most intolerable of dungeons, and leading a life so insupportably dull and dreary, haunted her; and her greatest pleasure was to force her forth into the bright sun, the fresh air, the gay and glistening Park; obliging her to taste those pleasures which were become by long custom insipid to herself. The proposal to take her out in an evening Emilia, however, steadily resisted. She had taken her resolution never to absent herself when Mr. Danby was at home; and though he seemed to take little pleasure in her society, and to receive these marks of consideration with anything but gratitude, still she persevered.

Her mornings, however, were chiefly given to her friend, who, restless and unhappy at heart, now sat in her boudoir confessing her follies, bewailing her faults, and listening to the representations and arguments of Emilia, and now abandoned herself to the wildest dissipation, filling the nights with an incessant repetition of parties, in which she found little pleasure, and the mornings in every scheme she could invent to destroy thought and divert unhappiness.

Why she was so unhappy, perhaps she might have found it difficult to say. It was the restless craving for excitement—the fatal habit acquired so early of looking upon life merely as a round of pleasures—the fatal absence of serious views, of principles of action, and of the sense of responsibility and duty, which rendered existence so vapid and so wearisome.

I repeat it in my own words, "Duty is the salt of life." The sense of duty is as necessary a stimulant to the health and enjoyment of our spiritual being as salt is to give flavour to the daily food of man.

Without it the world soon becomes utterly uninteresting and utterly tasteless—objects there are none to arouse—purpose there is none to attain. The being deprived of the means of happiness, or condemned to the endurance of pain, suffers, and suffers much; but Hope lingers at the bottom of the cup. Life retains its enchantments—the Hesperian gardens still glow in the west. Could they be attained, we might yet be happy. But woe to that wretched one who, like the gorgeous Eastern king, sated with wisdom, magnificence, and pleasure, has tasted of everything that the world can give, and arrived at the dire conclusion that *all* is vanity!

So it had been with Lisa, and so it would yet have been, but for an evil greater still. Gradually, and by slow degrees, she was allowing the insidious excitement of a guilty passion to obtain a place in her heart. Not that she loved—her affections were true to her careless and indifferent husband; but the pleasures of vanity, the gratification of enchaining as her captive that accomplished deceiver and inconstant rover, after whom the whole female world was *folle*, as the French say; and, more than all, the interest of a sort of intrigue of this kind, as yet guiltless in all but thought, were temptations too strong for resistance with one never disciplined while young, and who had imbibed corruption, as it were, from the very mother that reared her.

Colonel Lenox was now less than ever at home. During all her frequent visits to Grosvenor Street, Emilia had never once seen him again. Her plans for every one's happiness seemed, indeed, in a fair way to be disappointed. Wounded and mortified at the manner in which she had met him, after the cruel injury which he considered himself as having received—his heart, so little disciplined or corrected, still absorbed by her image—he had made a determination never, if possible, to speak to her more.

The apprehension of meeting her kept him more than ever from his wife's apartments; they now scarcely met, except when

they happened to be going out to dinner at the same place, and this was not often.

Lisa was deeply offended by this behaviour. She was, unhappily, experienced enough to divine the cause. It was the first time, in spite of all his negligence, that Colonel Lenox had ever given her occasion for serious jealousy, and her resentment knew no bounds. She was reasonable enough not to extend this feeling to Emilia, whose indifference surprised, but completely satisfied her; but all her thoughts were bent upon revenge. To make her husband feel—to wring that heart with pain which had given to her so much cruel anguish—was the wild delight, the contemplation of every hour. She felt the time might come when he, too late, might regret the heart he had thrown away; and, in the pursuit of this most dangerous object, she forgot every other consideration, and suffered the practised man of the world to make himself a place in her favour, and begin to exercise an influence over her heart of the full extent of which she was very little aware.

Little did the generous Emilia surmise the mischief she was so innocently doing.

Every day the cheek of Lisa grew paler, her eye more unsettled, her spirits more irritable and uncertain. Sometimes she would indulge in bursts of a gaiety as wild as that of her earliest days—at others, silent and melancholy, would pass whole hours without speaking. In general, she was affection itself to her friend, and filled with pity for what she considered her terrible lot—full of all sorts of generous plans for her happiness and diversion; at others, irritable, unreasonable, and unkind, it required all the sweetness of Emilia's temper, all her candour, and all her affection, even to bear with her.

The happiest time they spent was with the children, but even here the feelings of Lisa were as wayward and capricious as in other things. Sometimes she would seem to feel a passionate attachment to these little ones—at others, she would push them from her almost with aversion. The tears would suddenly gush over her little boy as she pressed him in her arms—then she would remember whose child he was, and put him hastily away.

Emilia, meantime, grew excessively attached to these children—so little the objects of continued and serious attention from either of their parents. They were altogether abandoned to the care of nurses, too little superintended to afford any security for their good management. She spent hours in their nurseries, caressing and playing with them, for, in truth, with them alone was there any comfort to be found. There was nothing but perplexity and anxiety elsewhere—here, with these innocent and defenceless creatures, did she alone seem to find peace.

Nurse—who, after all, was one of those rare beings amid the race of servants who do what they ought without being obliged to do it (an instance so singular that I beg it may not serve as an encouragement for any one to neglect that first duty of every wife and mother—inspection)—was not at all sorry to be released, at times, from her laborious cares by the presence of Mrs.

Danby. She was not in the least jealous of one who never presumed to interfere, advise, far less dictate, and was well enough pleased to be able to run down stairs now and then and have a gossip below—while Emilia, the sleeping babe pressed to her bosom, the little boy holding her dress and tottering by her side, paced up and down those spacious nurseries, lost in anxious and painful thoughts.

What was to be done?

How was this false and painful position, in which they seemed all standing, to be set right?—this terrible cloud, in which, as by enchantment, they seemed involved, to be dispersed? She alone of the whole party seemed spared from the most distressing feelings. She alone, and why?

CHAPTER XLIII.

Be it not seen on either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.—DRAYTON.

SHE did not, perhaps, know why.

But I could have told her.

Because the rest were all absorbed by their own vexations and disappointments, and she alone was endeavouring to do her duty; she alone, forgiving the unkindness, was intent upon the happiness of the others. Accustomed to disappointment, inured to suffer, and released from the one great torture of her life, the weight of a concealed and dangerous attachment, she was happy. In spite of all—she was happy.

She was happy, in her close, and dark, and narrow home—between the childish impatiences of her father, the invincible coldness of her husband, and the slights and affronts of her mother-in-law. And Lisa, surrounded with luxury, and flattery, and pleasure, with lovely children to fill the void within her heart, was miserable.

It was a delicious afternoon. The sky was blue and bright over head; the small white clouds lazily sailing in the deep expanse; the sun shining in all his splendour, tinting the green trees of the Park, and glittering upon the rapidly-glancing carriages, as Emilia entered Grosvenor Street, and stopped at the accustomed door.

The servant opened it.

Mrs. Lenox had driven out for about half an hour, and begged Mrs. Danby to have the kindness to wait for her return. Emilia entered the house, and went up stairs to the boudoir; but, hearing the voices of the children in the nursery, she ascended the second flight, and entered in her usual unceremonious manner.

The little boy started from his seat on the floor, and ran with impatient pleasure to meet her, flinging his little arms affectionately round her knees; the baby stretched out its hands, and crowded and sprang in nurse's arms to get to her.

Her heart responded warmly to all this. She took up the little boy, kissed, and set him down again. She took the baby

from nurse's arms, and pressed it to her bosom. She was soon seated in the rocking-chair, with both children on her lap, kissing, and fondling, and playing with them.

Nurse happened to be quite alone in the nursery that day.

"I am so glad to see you, madam," said she, curtsying, "for Mary has been taken suddenly ill; and the girl has just had leave to go home to her mother for a half-holiday; and Miss Baby ought to be put to sleep; and I have to go down to Mrs. Woodman for several things I must have got in—and altogether I am quite in a fuss."

There was no pleasure in the world for Emilia equal to that of lulling Lisa's baby to sleep.

She loved to have these large apartments quietly to herself, and would pace up and down alone for hours, carrying the slumbering infant in her arms. The quiet of the scene—the soft breathing of the infant—the air, the light—the beautiful view of the tufted Park, stretching before the windows—the wide expanse of sky, to her became an unaccustomed luxury; the well-ordered stillness of the apartment, the distant roar of the living world below, all soothed her spirits into a calm and delicious melancholy, which she could rarely or never taste in her small and darksome home.

She seemed to breathe more freely in these lofty apartments; her heart beat more calmly—she was refreshed and composed. All the perpetual irritations of her uncomfortable home were away, and that serenity to which she had been so long a stranger seemed restored.

She took the infant in her arms, and telling nurse to be under no uneasiness—that she would nurse it and get it to sleep—rose from her chair, and hushing the little one tenderly, began her favourite walk up and down the nursery; while nurse, having settled the little boy upon the floor, amid his playthings, went down stairs.

Leaving all so quiet—so still

Long did she carry the slumbering infant, ruminating upon the present—upon the past. Her thoughts flew back to times so long gone by—to her mother—to the terrace at the Oaks—to those days of youthful happiness, her sense of which had been so exquisitely fine.

Gone!—for ever!

Then she thought of Colonel Lenox, of that Colonel Lenox whom she had loved so truly; of him who had seemed to her so admirable and so excellent, and to merit far more than even her devoted love could give.

How was it with him, after all?

Was he become, in truth, cold and heartless—a mere man of fashion? Was his avoidance the effect of indifference? or was he himself unhappy? And, if unhappy, could not he be restored as she had been? Could not he be taught to love the being to whom the laws of society and duty bound him—the being, with all her faults, to him so deeply devoted?

So she mused, walking up and down the nursery the healthful

breathing of the slumbering infant seeming to keep measure with her quiet footsteps, when suddenly she heard one ascending the stairs rapidly; his bounding step was heard sounding through the gallery: the nursery door stood open, for the heat of the day was great, and he entered at once, his hat upon his head, with—

"How are the children, nurse? Well, my little rascals!"

But suddenly paused when he saw Emilia, changed colour, took off his hat, with—

"I beg your pardon—I interrupt you!" and was about to leave the room.

But his little boy, who had run forward as usual to meet him, and was clinging about his knees, seeing him about to go away without noticing him, burst into so loud a roar, that the father was obliged to stand still; while Emilia, colouring and embarrassed, was vainly endeavouring to pacify the infant, which, awakened by the noise made by the other child, joined its loud wail to the general confusion.

To run away, and leave her thus with his screaming children, seemed a thing impossible. He took up the little fellow in his arms, and kissing and caressing him, soon brought the April sunshine into his rosy cheek again, wet as it still was with tears.

The child restored to his playthings, after stooping down and talking to him a little, the Colonel rose up, and turning round, perceived Emilia, who was laying the infant, now again soothed to sleep, in its little nest of white muslin and ribands, intending to ring the bell, summon the nurses, and go herself down stairs.

He could not, he felt, leave the nursery as abruptly as he had entered it, without saying one single word to her. He came up colouring and hesitating, and, with a haughty coldness in his tone, muttered in a confused, inarticulate manner, something of "his being under infinite obligations to her for interesting herself in *his* children;" adding with some irritation in his voice,—
"It is well some one is good enough to visit them now and then, poor babes—God help them!"

To this a reply was necessary. Emilia looked up, and, in justification of her friend, said,—

"Mrs. Lenox has but lately left the nursery. She has been gone only a quarter of an hour, I believe to get a little fresh air in Kensington Gardens this beautiful day."

"And why are others not to enjoy the beauty of the day as well as herself?" said he. "I understand it all quite well. Half an hour ago, having nothing on earth to do, the humour was to make playthings of her children, just like that poor child's playthings to be thrown aside;"—and the words "Trifling! idle! capricious!" were muttered in a contemptuous manner.

"Lisa is something more than merely trifling, idle, and capricious," said Emilia, gravely.

"Perhaps so," said he, turning away, but not leaving the nursery.

He began to walk up and down near the place where Emilia, still soothing his infant, was standing.

"*C'est égal*.—She may be ill-tempered, and exacting besides."

"And nothing else?" said Emilia, lifting up her head and looking at him, for she was hurt for her friend.

"Nothing else that I care for. Such pretty butterflies please and amuse for an hour, and then their power is over. A man must esteem before he can *love*. Yes, Emilia," he added, coming suddenly up, and fixing his eyes sternly upon her;—"a man who has known what it was to esteem, and to be disappointed, has no indulgence to spare for triflers such as these. He has needed it all, not to *curse* another."

He turned away with a gesture of anger and despair.

She said nothing. He took two or three turns, and came to her again.

"It was a brief infidelity—a folly for which my life is not too much to pay—and my life is given; that is, all that external ceremonial of life which she, or any one such as she, has a right to claim. What pretension can she make to the possession of my heart? She ought to have known it was not made for such a one as she is!"

And again he turned away, and walked hastily up and down the nursery; while Emilia, imprisoned by the children, pale, uneasy, sorrowful, and displeased, stood in a sort of doubtful embarrassment, uncertain what to say, or whether to speak at all.

He came up to her again, stood with his eyes fixed upon her, and said at last, in a deep low voice,—

"Emilia!"

She shook her head. She would not look up and answer to that appeal, though her heart, in spite of all, trembled at the voice and name.

He turned away again; then he returned, took a chair, and sat down near her.

"Why should I not do it now? I have longed—I have prayed for this moment. In the agony of my heart, I have thought—might I but once more see her—open my heart to her—tell her—"

"No—no—no—you must not—you must not, she said, rising up, and in excessive distress. "Do not mistake me—do not misunderstand my agitation. I have struggled long, but I have vanquished at last. The past must be as nothing—oh, let it be as nothing!"

"It is all I have left in life," said he.

"Do not speak in this way, pray, Colonel Lenox! Oh, Lenox!" she exclaimed, turning to him with a look of generous affection, while the tears rose into her eyes, "I have been miserable enough—greatly miserable! Let me not be so wretched as to believe that, when I cast myself away, I shipwrecked you. It has been a long, long struggle, Lenox; but it has pleased the Almighty at last to restore me to myself. For you!—oh, I thought that men got over these things more easily! I have suffered for myself—I did not think of you!"

"No," he said; "*that* is plain enough to be seen."

She was silent, but her tears fell fast over her cheeks,

She felt his resentment deeply. All the circumstances of her melancholy story passed rapidly through her mind—all she had suffered since they parted—the affection which now had succeeded to a more dangerous sentiment—the earnest desire for his happiness which she had ever felt! This covert reproach wounded her to the heart.

And then to see him so recklessly indulging in feelings now so blameable—the injustice he was committing to Lisa—the careless defiance of all that was right in himself!

She endeavoured to compose herself, and then she said,—

"It is true, Colonel Lenox; I will not affect to misunderstand you, nor will I reproach you. I do not know what claim you have upon me for explanation."

"The claim of an exchange of hearts," he said, almost fiercely.

"If there was an exchange," said she, "I had no means of being assured of it."

"Too true," said he, with despondency. "There it was. I thought it was honourable and right not to endeavour to bind you by a promise; but I see you resented it."

"Have you never heard what passed?" said she, in a voice so low that it was almost inarticulate.

"I know you married a rich old man for his money," said he, roughly; "that was all I ever knew; and the rest I never cared to know. Perhaps you love him now—the better for you. I wish I could follow your example."

"I do respect, esteem, and honour my husband," said Emilia, firmly. "He has been generous to me and mine in their utmost need. And, oh! if I might venture so far—why will you not—why do you not—love the fair but too susceptible creature who has given you her heart? Why do you not love Lisa?"

"Because I neither respect, esteem, nor honour her. Oh, Emilia! it should have been *you*! With you, I was another man: with this idle and thoughtless being I am only an irritated, ill-tempered, heartless fool."

"Ah, my Lisa! is it thus your love is returned?"

"Love! Do you know where she is and how she is employed at this very moment?"

"No," said Emilia, faintly.

"Then learn! She is listening to the flatteries, and worse than flatteries, of one of the most unprincipled men in London, and that in defiance of her husband's commands and of her husband's warning: and you can talk of her heart! But I care not! Let her go her own way, and leave me to follow mine."

"Ah, Colonel Lenox!" said Emilia, earnestly, "is this you? Is Lisa in such frightful danger?—is that young creature, so beautiful and so affectionate, who loved you once only too fondly—can she be, indeed, trifling at the edge of the horrible precipice, and can you—dare you—speak in this utterly heartless manner? Forgive me," she said hurriedly, "if I speak too plainly—but, good Heavens! if we should lose her! You said *now*! Where is she now? why are you not with her! Forgive me again; but tell me only where she is, and if you will not, I will follow her!"

"*I follow her!*" said he; "no, I have made up my mind upon that subject. The woman who requires watching is not worth the labour."

She was astonished at this speech. He saw that her colour was rising fast, and that she could scarcely answer for indignation.

"Nay," said he, "do me justice, at least. You should have been present yesterday when I remonstrated with her—you should have witnessed her insolent triumph over my jealousy, as she was pleased to call it—her contemptuous defiance of my advice and opinion. I have given her up. I have long ceased to care what becomes of myself; I as little heed now what becomes of her. We are both of us wretches—worthless, shipwrecked, and miserable wretches! And the sooner we make an end of this farce of constancy, perhaps, the better."

There was something so unutterably miserable in his countenance while these words of impatient desperation broke from him, something in the heated manner in which he pushed back his chair, so recalling those hasty expressions of resentment which she remembered at the Oaks, that her heart was touched to the quick for him.

She left the side of the little bed, came up to where he sat, and said, kindly,—

"I have known a great deal of sorrow since we parted. I am grown old in sorrow. May I speak to you as a friend?—may I venture to tell you how very wrong I think you?"

"Tell me anything: speak to me for ever!" said he, passionately.

"Nay," said she, drawing back, "it must not be in this manner; in this manner I dare not—I ought not—I cannot—I will not speak with you. It rests with yourself, Colonel Lenox, whether these are the last sentences we are ever to exchange; if you cannot imagine yourself in the presence of Mr. Danby, *I* will."

"That is a mere conventional farce, Emilia," said he angrily. "I thought you had been above such affectation. What right has Mr. Danby?—*he*, at least, never had your heart."

"He has my hand—he has my duty—he has my esteem—and he has my everlasting gratitude," said she, warmly. "He has loved me indifferent—he has sheltered me thankless—he has saved me when I was about to perish—and I am not going to forget him. I should be the very basest, meanest, most despicable creature on the earth," she cried, the generous tears rising to her eyes, "if I could suffer any one in the universe, in my hearing, to wrong or disparage Mr. Danby."

He was silenced; he turned away mortified and disappointed.

"Enough!" he said; "I know you at last. You never had a heart—you never knew what it was to have a heart; you are a cold, calculating, conventional being—and you call *that* morality!"

"I call it honour and gratitude," she cried, excited beyond her usual self. "And if you never knew me before, know me

now. But enough, as you say; we indeed have been mistaken in each other. I thought—foolish that I was!—that we might have lived to encourage each other in the cheerful performance of our several duties. I see I was indeed wildly romantic and miserably mistaken! How could I trust in man, or the child of man!"

He was struck and confounded, but he was trying again to speak.

"Say no more!" said she. "I am too much hurried, too much excited, to listen as I ought to one whom, perhaps, I have injured. For *that*, if I have deserved your anger, I ask forgiveness. Farewell, Colonel Lenox! I was foolish and mistaken; I thought it would be different—I thought it would be quite different; but I was mistaken. Farewell, Colonel Lenox! henceforward let us be as strangers."

And crossing the nursery with a firm but hasty step, she rang the bell for the servants, and immediately quitted the room.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Vous êtes dans une carrière

Où l'on ne se pardonne rien.—LAFONTAINE.

THIS was the unhappy scene to which Colonel Lenox had alluded.

The night before, he had been with Lisa at a magnificent party given at Carlton House, where all the London world had been assembled, and where, as a matter of course, the Duke had been numbered among the most elegant and distinguished men of the distinguished party.

Mrs. Lenox, dressed in the most beautiful and expensive manner which it was possible for London art and London extravagance to attain; her colour, just raised by the heat of the room; her eyes, more brilliant than the brightest of the spangled diamonds around; her air, soft, languid, and interesting, was, by the whole world's unanimous voice, pronounced to be the most beautiful creature there.

Even the royal host had turned his discriminating eyes upon her, and had honoured her with a considerable portion of that attention which was in itself sufficient to elevate any one to the very highest pinnacle of fashionable celebrity. The Duke was not insensible of the increased value the beautiful Mrs. Lenox was thus acquiring in the eyes of every one; and his vanity, and the sort of attachment he felt, were enhanced and excited by the idea of being singled out as the favoured of one, the admired of all beholders.

His attentions became more pointed than they had yet been; he seemed proud to announce himself as her captive, and devoted his attentions to her in a manner that could not but be observed by every one, as he evidently intended that they should be.

Lisa had been more vexed, offended, and unhappy during the preceding day than usual.

Dressed in all her loveliness, she had consulted her large

glass; the glass had told a faithful tale of extreme, of incomparable beauty. She had gone down to join her husband, flushed with conscious charms, and feeling assured that at this moment, at least, he must admire her; that something of those days of love, after which her fond heart for ever yearned, must return; that for the instant, at least, she should find the lover restored in the husband.

He was sitting in her boudoir reading, and on the sofa by his side lay her little dog. He had not laid aside his old custom of pulling at the dog's ears when he was thinking of something else.

Now he was deep in his book; I believe it was "Rocca's Spain," just then come out.

She came in, looking like the fairy queen herself—so soft and light was her tread; her figure all covered with white satin and the greatest abundance of delicate lace, and bedropped, as it were, with diamonds that sparkled like morning dew; her handsome little page, in his green velvet, carrying two wax-lights, and walking before her; she came in, triumphant, delighted to know that he was there.

He did not even look up—he was busy at Ronda.

She felt a little annoyed, but went softly round, and laid the most beautiful white hand in the world upon the open page.

He did not even take up that pretty hand and kiss it as he removed it, as her busy heart told her he once would have done; he only said,—

"Don't!—how tiresome you are!" pushed it away unceremoniously enough, and continued to read.

"And what a bear you are!" said she, hurt and disappointed; and as usual, alas! when hurt and disappointed, losing her temper, and as usual, on losing her temper, becoming rude in her turn.

"You are very well-bred," said he, still without looking up, "to interrupt one who happens to be engaged in what interests him, in order to inform him of such an agreeable piece of news. I wish you would spend your ill-humour upon your maid; she's paid to bear it." And he tried to read, but the ready colour flew into his face.

"If I am rude," she said, her colour rising fast and crimsoning her cheeks, "and ill-tempered, it's what I learn from the company I keep. The time was—and not long ago either—when all I said and did was right, and now all I say and do is wrong; *then*, my hand put over the page of your odious book would not have put you in a passion."

"Passion!—stuff!" said he, looking up at her at last; "I don't go into passions; it is a weakness I leave to you. You come and put your hand very disagreeably, as I think, over my book when I am reading; it is your pleasure, I believe, to interrupt every occupation that does not centre in yourself. I presume to push your hand away, and you choose to call me a bear for it; that's all. Your calling me a bear doesn't put me in a passion. I am getting well broken in to the hearing such pretty epithets." His indifference cut her to the heart.

"Oh!" she could not help exclaiming, for the ten-thousandth time, "the frightful, frightful change!"

"I'll tell you what it is," said he, "you never will learn to be reasonable. You expect impossibilities, and you can't have them; you cry for the moon, and think me the cruellest of wretches because I can't give it you, and won't pretend that I can."

"Insulting!" cried she, walking about so suffocated with indignation and vexation that she could scarcely speak; "insulting wretch!—treacherous deceiver! Oh! had I but known—"

"I will tell you what, Lisa—I am getting heartily tired of these scenes—I hate scenes. I know perfectly well what all this means. I was once a fool—all men are fools in their turn—I was blindly in love with you. Every one, at some period or another of this life, is the victim of this brief madness; but they are fools, indeed, with whom it lasts long. And now, because I am become a reasonable being, and no longer the willing slave, as in my days of folly, to every idle caprice of yours, I am a wretch and a hypocrite, and I know not what. You are such a slave to your vanity and love of power that you make yourself miserable, because you cannot preserve an empire which every rational creature knows exists but for the moment. Because your husband is no longer your infatuated lover, but the reasonable being he ought to be, you choose to consider yourself as the most wronged and injured of women. Let us have done with this nonsense. Once for all, I say, I'm wearied of it."

Oh! Colonel Lenox, why had you not the kindness and the goodness to teach these harsh, unwelcome truths in words less cold and irritating? Why could not you more gently correct that heart which, with all its imperfections, was filled with love most sincere for you? Why would you persist in misunderstanding it, and attributing to idle vanity what was only the mistaken claim of a too exacting attachment? But so it was—you were greatly wrong; you were cherishing in your heart the memory of another idol; you were bringing this young and undisciplined creature into constant comparison with this ideal perfection; and all her waywardnesses, errors, and caprices were exaggerated by the injustice. She had many faults; but, under this unfair proceeding on your part, she appeared to you to be made up of faults. You were contrasting her—beautiful, young, in all the elaborate elegance of her dress—with that pale and statue-like figure, so calm, so simple, so severe, whom you had seen sitting by her side in the Park; and every charm she possessed was reversed to your diseased eye.

Her sweetness, her gaiety, her whim, her endless variety, on which once you had dwelt so passionately and so fondly, were now nothing but volatile, insipid idleness and caprice.

Stung to the quick, she came hastily up to him, and said passionately,—

"You hate me!"

"No, I don't at all," said he, with a sarcastic smile; "but you are doing everything you can to make me."

"Am I?—very well; we shall see. There *are* ways of becom-

ing hateful; there *are* ways of stinging any man; the worm will turn at last. We shall see—we shall see!"

She turned away, and walked up and down the room, fanning herself, till snap went the delicate carved ivory fan in her hands.

She flung it upon the floor, and trampled it under her feet.

"Childish!" he said, and bent down to his book, and began to stroke and pull the dog's ears again.

"Let my dog alone," said she, pettishly, coming up to the sofa and taking the little creature in her arms; "it loves me—you ought to hate it!" And bending her head over the little favourite, the abundant pearly drops fell upon the animal's silken hair.

The tears did her good; the very holding of the little creature in her arms, which showed that love dogs so well know how to express—a love that has consoled many a forlorn and disappointed heart before—soothed her.

She became composed and quiet, and sat down in her arm-chair, holding the dog in her arms and waiting for her carriage, without taking any further notice of the persevering reader opposite.

But she was deeply wounded, and the resentment which she had never been taught to conquer by reflection was embittering every feeling of her heart.

The carriage was announced; and, without saying a word good or bad, he rose, took her arm in his, put her into the carriage, and followed her.

Not one single syllable did he deign to utter as they went along, not one word of conciliation or kindness fell from his haughty lips; and by the time they reached Carlton House, her colour was, I have said, high, her eye bright and almost flashing, and a spirit and animation in her whole demeanour that rendered her incomparably beautiful, even in that most high and beautiful assemblage.

And was he not greatly to be blamed who gave to the artful deceiver the great advantage of a contrast such as this to all his persuasive flatteries—to that tenderness which melted in his eye—to those tones that vibrated from his lips, telling the dangerous story of a heart devoted, passionately devoted, where another was so utterly indifferent and careless?

She could not help casting a triumphant glance round the room to see whether he observed her or not, and most surely there he was; he was standing in a remote part of the apartment, leaning against one of the windows, and was watching her, evidently with an expression of mingled alarm and displeasure. Presently he left the place he occupied and glided to one much nearer.

She saw it—her eyes flashed with pleasure; her heart beat high, her spirits rose. How she talked, and flirted, and coquetted with her dangerous companion! How charming she was! how really and truly enchanted was he!

Dating from that evening, a change came over him. He began, for the first time for many years, to feel something like

love on his part—he began to be in danger of being himself enchained. The deceiver and the flatterer alone was exchanged for the still more dangerous, the far more insidious beguiler, because the accents of truth and passion were beginning to fall from his lips, and the expression which spoke in his eye was not altogether feigned.

CHAPTER XLV.

I see a woman may be made a fool,
If she had not a spirit to resist. —SHAKESPEARE.

THE next morning Mrs. Lenox was sitting at her late breakfast, the enchantments of the evening still filling her fancy, those fatal accents still vibrating on her ear, her heart still drinking in the dangerous consolation of knowing that there was one whose passion vindicated the power of her charms from her husband's indifference; and ah! still far more delightful to the heart of woman that *he*, the secret object even of this infidelity—that he did see and must see how others estimated that which he so carelessly disregarded. She was recollecting that expression of countenance which had betrayed him while leaning in the window, and her head reeled with triumph.

There she sat, upon that softly-cushioned sofa, still alone, except for the faithful little dog by her side, sipping her tea, and smiling to herself. She was loveliness personified.

The door opened abruptly, and her husband walked in. He looked round hastily to see whether she was alone, then took a chair without ceremony, and sat down exactly opposite to her on the other side of the table.

He looked very much annoyed and discomposed, and his colour was high and his eyes excited.

She saw he was moved. She just glanced at him triumphant, and then, with a look the most demure in the world, resumed her tea-spoon, looked down, and sipped her tea.

"There is not much encouragement," he said, abruptly, "to remonstrate with you; but as I think it may be *just possible* that you are not exactly aware of the character of the man with whom you seemed upon such prodigiously good terms last night, I think, as your husband, it is my duty to inform you."

"Really!" she exclaimed, with a look of affected surprise. "I am sure you are vastly good to me!"

"He's the greatest profligate about town."

"Dear me!" and she began in her turn to play off the indifferent; and bending over her little dog, she stroked his ears and kissed his head.

"Did you happen to know this before, Lisa?" he said, angrily.

"I don't know it now," she replied, looking up, innocent as a lamb.

"What do you mean by that? Not know it now? Do you pretend to doubt that I know well enough what's going on in society, and *am* a pretty good authority in such cases?"

"Oh! don't go into a passion. I don't the least mean to take

you for an ignorant innocent—far from that. I don't doubt your knowing well enough what's going on; but as for that one unfortunate object of your animadversions, I—"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"I beg leave to doubt your impartiality. Don't I, Fan-fan!—my darling treasure of a Fan-fan!—don't I, my pet, and most exquisite of puppies and spaniels?"

"My impartiality! What nonsense are you thinking of? Please to put down that dog, ma'am, when your husband is talking to you. Must you always be too silly to listen to a reasonable word?"

"I don't think it silly at all," said she, looking at him with an air of the most provoking triumph, "not to listen to the idle calumnies of jealousy. I think, in that case, wives had better think of something else, till the yellow fit is over. An't it so, Fan-fantaris? darling of darlings!" caressing and fondling it in her arms.

"Put that dog down! I insist upon it," said he, almost fiercely, "or I'll fling the brute out of the window!"

"Oh, do, by all means! As you can't make me listen to reasonable words, by all means let us have reasonable actions. Why, are you not ashamed of yourself now, Colonel Lenox?"

She said this smiling in his face as playfully and as sweetly as she possibly could.

"Intolerable!" he cried, getting up and walking two or three times up and down the room to recover his composure; then he returned and sat down again, and looked at her steadily.

"Lisa," he said, "listen to me. I am content, in general, to act upon the plan which seems tacitly agreed upon between us. You go your way, I go mine; but your behaviour last night, let me tell you, neither accords with my honour nor your own; and, once for all, I beg we may have no more of it."

"My behaviour last night! Upon my word! Oh! you didn't like it. I suppose not. Nobody likes to find that others can prize what they have cast away. No one, I suppose, likes to find that one, fool enough, as you said last night, once to love, can have found means to recover his or her reason! Oh, no! by no means! that's only proper for husbands. Wives must be the humble, enduring slaves—happy if their lord condescends, in his ineffable kindness, not to beat them. Everything less than that," cried she, firing, "I have endured from you; and it is the pride and joy of my heart to have made you jealous at last!"

"Jealous!" he cried, indignantly. Nothing stung his pride like the idea of being made jealous. Jealous of his own wife! Could anything on earth, in his opinion, be more thoroughly contemptible! "Jealous!"

"Ay, jealous!" she repeated, springing up and dancing round him in the most provoking manner: "jealous as an orange, and quite of that *civil* complexion." Oh, dear me! don't be afraid. I have a spirit—and the heart you have thrown away I have picked up; and perhaps—perhaps—but don't be afraid—I'll take care of its honour, poor fellow!"

"You had best," said he, absolutely gnashing his teeth with rage. "You had best. I care little for you—but I care for my honour; and if you trifle with that, as sure as you stand there alive, I'll kill you!"

"La! what a horrid catastrophe! Smother me, like the black brute in the play! Your poor lambkin of a Desdemona! No—no—no—never think of such wicked doings! You know, my dear, you'd get hanged for it."

"Lisa," said he, seizing her by the arm, and shaking her roughly, "have a care. You are provoking me beyond bearing, and you know you are. I have only to say three words more. I *insist* upon your breaking off this *liaison* with the Duke. The eyes of all the world were upon you last night. He is, I tell you, a regular profligate. It is infamous for any woman to appear upon such terms with him as you did. I *command* you to put an end to it."

"And I won't, then! There's a defiance, in answer to your commands. If you are mad with jealousy, I, thank Heaven! have preserved my senses. I know what I am about. I know there's no harm in it; and I'm not going to set all the scandal-mongering world a-talking. Nonsense! how can you be so absurd? But I wish you'd let go my arm; you'll pinch it off, I think. Good Heavens! you brute! what a place! It's as black as a shoe."

And so the delicate arm was, as she pushed up the loose sleeve of her morning dress, and displayed it before him.

He looked confounded.

"I beg your pardon, Lisa. I did not mean to hurt you; but you provoked me beyond my powers of endurance. I come to give you a warning as a friend, and you will persist in disregarding my counsel as merely that of a jealous fool."

"And so I did! and so I do!" cried she, her eyes flashing with delight. "Ah, Lenox! you are not so insensible as you would pretend."

Why did he not take the still devoted but most ~~mistaken~~ trifter to his bosom at this—press her to his heart, forgive, counsel, reason, command her? One word of tenderness would have done anything with her; but his pride, his ill-disciplined pride, forbade.

He coloured as she spoke, was silent a few seconds, and then said, coldly,—

"It is useless to reason with one who persists in mistaking everything that is said. I repeat, that I counsel you as a friend, and command you as a husband—I will have no more of this sort of public exhibitions of yourself in company with that man. Do you mind what I say?"

"And I repeat," said she, her spirit again mastering her, "that I will follow your counsel when I think it deserves attention; but I appeal from Philip jealous to Philip when in his senses; and as for your *commands*, I defy them! Pooh! nonsense! Do you think I mind such old wives' stuff as that?"

"I have done, then," said he, looking deeply offended, and rising from his chair. "Let us live, as we part, as strangers."
 "Lenox!"

But he would not turn back: he had left the room, and she heard him go down stairs.

Her carriage was at the door; but, instead of going, as she had intended, to fetch Mrs. Danby, she gave orders to be driven into the Park, and that another carriage should be despatched for her friend.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Nay, we must think men are not gods;
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.—SHAKESPEARE.

SHE went into the Park: it was still empty, and her little phaeton was driven into the Wood.

Disappointed and depressed—all her vain and idle triumph over—there she sat, lost in musing, as the carriage drove slowly along.

She began to be alienated at last, in her turn—she began to despair of ever regaining her power over her husband's affections—she began to feel that real desolation which for so long had been only imaginary—she began to think with something of tenderness and gratitude upon him who offered his adoration to one so mortified and forsaken—she began to parley with principles which, however vague and unsettled upon points of the minor morals, had, till then, resisted what was obviously wrong—she began to ask herself those dangerous and casuistical questions which have upset so many in their life's career.

She began to question her duties—to talk to herself of nature, and the rights of the heart, and all those vain sophistications, which have, alas! so often betrayed.

The passionate desire of revenge seemed the only sentiment remaining that might have told her how dear, in spite of all her resentment, Colonel Lenox was; and that her imagination was, even at this moment, occupied with the idea of paining him, rather than with that of being herself happy with another.

There was no one as yet in the Park; and, after about an hour's drive, she ordered her servant to return home, for her heart was yet full, and she longed to talk with Mrs. Danby.

She found Emilia walking up and down the drawing-room in Grosvenor Street, with a colour raised, and an eye troubled as her own.

She was endeavouring to compose her thoughts: she was endeavouring, as it were, to staunch the wounds she had received. His words had been cruel and unkind beyond measure: she was trying to be just, and to forgive him. She was trying to remember that he had been disappointed, and that she had been inconstant; she was telling herself to be candid, and not resentful—to be compassionate, and not unjust. She was endeavouring to steel her heart against that fatal self-pity which would

have quite unnerved her, and to bear to be unkindly treated by them all.

The door opened and Lisa came hastily in, and, seeing her alone, ran to her, flung her arms round her neck, and, as in the days of their early affection, burst into tears and sobbed upon her bosom.

Emilia put her arms round her, as when she was a child, kissed her, and soothed her with—

“What is the matter now, my sweet Lisa?”

“I am the greatest wretch this earth contains.”

“My love, don’t say so! Nay, pretty one, don’t think so!” she murmured, in such soft and kind tones, as if it were the good guardian angel of her spirit that spoke.

“I have told you so before, Emilia, and it is but too true,” said Mrs. Lenox, flinging herself upon the sofa, and covering her face with her handkerchief—“he hates me.”

“No, my love, he does not: believe me, sweet Lisa, he cannot—but you do not understand each other. Have patience, my love.”

“I thought at last I had stung his proud heart to the quick,” said she, withdrawing her handkerchief from her eyes, and speaking warmly and indignantly: “and if he had possessed a heart not harder than the nether millstone, so I should. I thought, if all other feeling was destroyed, at least I could wring his haughty soul with jealousy. I have not even the power to do that.”

“Jealousy!” repeated Emilia, taking her hand. “Ah, Lisa, never—never—never try that wicked, dangerous game.”

“And why not?” cried Lisa, withdrawing her hand: “is it not well—is it not true—is it not right—that he should know that others can adore where he is so cruelly indifferent, and that it rests with me alone that I have not my full revenge?”

“Good Heavens, Lisa! Is it possible?—can it be you who talk in this desperate and most improper manner?”

“Why should it not be me? Did I ever pretend to be better than the rest of the world? What reason on earth is there that I should? I am sure I never learned anything but what was bad since I have been born. And am I not provoked beyond the endurance of woman? And why, pray, am I to be better than any woman breathing ever was in my situation? It’s fine talking, Emilia; but you don’t know what it is!”

“We all think our own trial the hardest,” said Emilia, gently; “but, hard or not, we must bear what is imposed. But as for what other women would do—how can you, Lisa, indulge in such vain and idle talk? In the first place, you do not know what other women *would* do; and, in the second, whatever they would do will neither excuse you in doing wrong, nor console you under the misery of wrong.”

“I don’t care for the misery! I dare say there’s misery everywhere. I am sure there is not a wretch on the face of the earth so miserable as I am at this moment! But I sometimes think,” she said, colouring, and in a low voice, “I am but a poor, weak fool to bear it.”

"Your words are all unintelligible to me, Lisa: I cannot understand you this morning."

"It's better you should not: you have troubles enough of your own, I am sure; and it's a wretched thing in me to vex you with mine."

"Nay, my love, you know but too well, almost my only happiness on earth is to be of use to you, my Lisa! And now, my love, may I take the freedom of a friend with you? May I venture to speak as if we were still in that green walk at school, Lisa?"

"Say on," said Lisa; "you are only too good for me."

"Are you quite sure that the loss you regret of your husband's heart may not in part arise from your own fault?"

"I did not think to hear that, at least, from *you!*" said Lisa, kindling, and withdrawing her hand abruptly. "No, I did not think—in spite of all I know—that you would take his part to my face, Emilia."

And she turned from her.

Emilia was confounded.

"I know—I am sharp enough to see—I am not quite blind."

"My Lisa," was the answer, in a deep and sorrowful voice, "*then* all between us is at an end. If you know me so little as this, it had indeed been better that we two had never met again. You cannot—you dare not—suspect me of unfair dealing between you and your husband. It is impossible, Lisa!"

"Forgive me!" said the changeable and impressible creature, "I don't know what I say: only don't take *his* part, Emilia. I can't, indeed—I can't bear that."

"That is so childish!"

"Yes, *he* calls me childish!"

"So foolish, dear Lisa, to talk of taking parts. There are no parts here. All I wish is to see you both happy; and to observe you mistaking and misunderstanding each other, and the happiness of each so completely thrown away, and for nothing—it is a grievous sight."

"It's all his own fault—entirely his own fault. I could have loved him—I did love him—I do love him still, fondly, faithfully, tenderly; but heart of woman will not brook the way he treats me—nor will I."

"And yet, Lisa, Colonel Lenox is neither an ill-natured man, nor an unprincipled man, nor a foolish man."

"But he is a heartless, treacherous, unfeeling man. Oh, Emilia, Emilia! if you had listened to those words of passion that once flowed from his lips—words such as I never heard but once since," said she, colouring deeply, "you would understand the bitter, bitter change to this rudeness and this insolent unkindness."

"Men will be men," was Emilia's reply.

"If that is to be men, they shan't be so to me," said Lisa, firing. "They may get those who will bear it—I will not. I would not be a slave so base—no, not for the universe!"

"Not for peace—not for love—not for right?" said Emilia.

"I don't know what you mean, after all; I don't know what I can do better than I do do."

"Could you not, Lisa, restrain your tongue—that tongue which ever ran so fast when you were excited? Do you not think, if you put a curb upon that vehement mode of expression that you have—and when, after all, he is in the right: he is warning you against a dangerous and vicious connexion, against a man—"

"Oh! he has been telling tales, has he? He has been calling upon you to interfere? He has condescended to complain? He is jealous, after all! I know it! I thought it! Say what he will, his proud heart is brought down to jealousy at last!"

"Alas, Lisa! and can this be your purpose—to wound, and offend, and alienate?"

But it was in vain—Lisa responded not to the gentle wisdom of her friend; she scarcely listened to the little lecture which Emilia so gently and so seriously administered. She would not listen—she did not wish to be convinced—she had unhappily gone so far in wrong that she began to hate the right.

She sat a little time struggling with her impatience—for she could not bear to be impatient with Emilia; at last she sprang up from the sofa, and said—

"How qualmish, and whimperish, and nonsensical we all are this morning! Come, child, let us go somewhere and change the scene. Oh! let us go into the King's Road, and buy flowers. I am so sick of that horrid Park—I hate the very sight of it! Don't talk to me any more just now, Emilia, about being good; for I am in a humour to quarrel with an angel to-day—and you are a very angel: and then, when I am cross with you, it *does* make me so unhappy."

And she kissed her.

Emilia sighed, and said no more.

She followed her lively companion almost passively to the carriage; for there was nothing she so much dreaded as letting her be alone, and yet she felt how useless was the watchfulness of a few hours when for so many she was left unguarded.

But the good seem impelled to do their best, however little that best may avail.

And so it was with Emilia; every five minutes she could call her own was bestowed upon her friend.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The world is full of troubles, horrors, slights;

Wood's harmless shades have only true delights.—*DAVIDSON.*

WELL had Emilia said she had put her trust in man, and the child of man, and her trust had betrayed her.

But there was one, a child of man, in whom she shall not find her trust betrayed. She had not seen him for many, many years; but riding slowly up the Park one day, paler and thinner than he used to be, but still the son of rural health and vigour,

and mounted on a horse of uncommon beauty, she saw once more Johnny Wilcox.

She wanted a friend—never in her life had she more wanted a friend than she did now.

In London, a woman's whole course of action is impeded if there be no man on whose relationship she has a claim to aid her, or on whose friendship she can place undoubting confidence. She is in one large prison, walking about in fetters, unable to perform any action of weight or importance.

Emilia had begun to feel this want lately in its fullest extent. Ever since the sort of explanation, if it may be so called, which had passed between herself and Colonel Lenox, it had been as she had said; they had become absolute strangers; if they chanced to meet they never spoke—a cold salute was all that was exchanged between them. He looked haughtily and proudly resentful—she serene, frank, and determined. At last Colonel Lenox suddenly left London. Her anxiety upon the subject of Lisa's conduct now increased every hour.

She was at this moment coming up the Park in the carriage, which Mrs. Lenox had sent for her, as was now too often her custom, telling her she would find her in Kensington Gardens—gardens the very name of which Emilia detested—so often had she seen her leave them or enter them in the hateful society of that most dangerous man.

She had resolved this day, that, if possible, instead of waiting in the carriage till Lisa left the gardens, she would herself seek her there; but could she venture in unattended and alone? She was hesitating what to do, when the figure of a young gentleman slowly riding up the Park caught her eye.

Could it be he?

He was, as usual, mounted upon a fine horse; but there was so great an improvement in his appearance, that for a few seconds she hesitated in feeling assured that the gentlemanlike person she was approaching could be her old friend, Johnny Wilcox.

And yet, most assuredly, so it was.

The cheek was paler; the figure fined down, as the saying is; the whole appearance, dress, and manner changed, from its former rustic homeliness, to one that spoke the man practised in and accustomed to company and to the world. Still the same look of freshness, frankness, and kindness remained—there was a something about him that could never be mistaken.

Her heart beat with pleasure at the sight—a pleasure so sweet, so pure! It was like a restoration of the losses of the past, thus to see before her an old friend, endeared by so many recollections.

To catch his eye—to move to and acknowledge him was the work of a moment. Mr. Wilcox was at her side. Though others had found or pretended to find it difficult to recognise her, he knew her at once; and the deep colour that suffused his cheek, and the hurried and stammering accents with which, immediately approaching the carriage, he accosted her, showed that

he did; while the affectionate respect of his greeting proved to her, at the same time, that, however much altered with regard to the outer man, the heart of Johnny Wilcox was still the same.

"I have so long despaired of ever seeing you again, Mrs. Danby," he began. "I have visited London every season since you left the country, and yet I never could meet you anywhere, and now I see you, I cannot think how it can have happened that I have never met with you before."

"I live very much retired," she replied; "quite out of the regions of this pleasant life which you are all leading here—I might almost say I had been buried alive, till my friend, Mrs. Lenox, made me out—and she will insist upon my enjoying the fresh air of the Park every day."

"She is right," said her friend looking anxiously at her. "Ah, Miss Wyndham!—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Danby I mean—you do not look as you had used to do at the Oaks!"

"Do not I? That is but an ill compliment, I fear—though, perhaps, you do not mean it as one. No, London air does not particularly well suit me."

"And may I venture to ask, in what part of London might I be allowed to call?"

"I live in Chancery Lane, Mr. Wilcox, and should have the greatest possible pleasure in presenting you to Mr. Danby."

Mr. Wilcox coloured, paused, and then said,—

"I shall be happy to make the acquaintance of any one fortunate enough to stand in so near a relationship to you."

"You will be glad to make the acquaintance of so sensible a man, for your own sake, Mr. Wilcox. You are one who will be able to appreciate the merits of Mr. Danby."

He looked at her wistfully—he remembered the scene at the church-door—it had, indeed, been present to his mind ever since. He had understood the extent of the sacrifice, and the idea had well-nigh driven him distracted.

To another, more distinguished, more deserving than he was, he had taught himself to say he could with pleasure resign her; but to lose her for such a one as this! That thought had long fed in secret upon the spirits, and paled the ruddy cheek of Johnny Wilcox.

"Yes," she said, understanding, but not appearing to understand his gaze—"yes," in that direct manner in which she made it a law to herself to speak of her husband, "you will appreciate Mr. Danby, and he will appreciate you; for he loves all that is simple and sincere."

It was enough—as with Colonel Lenox, so with Johnny Wilcox—whatever they might choose to think, they felt that Mr. Danby must be respected before his wife.

The proud and selfish Colonel Lenox was irritated and offended. The good and generous Johnny Wilcox was relieved and comforted to find how it must be.

They spoke a little of the weather, of the fulness of the town, of this and that carriage which drove by; and then, insensibly they slid into a talk upon more interesting things.

"And the poor Oaks—what has become of them? I really, Mr. Wilcox, since I left them, have not been able to speak upon the subject till I met you. You had something of the same feeling for them, and for those who inhabited them, that I have. How is it with the poor Oaks? Has any one got it who loves it for——? or is it all cut down, defaced, and *improved*?"

"Not the least in the world improved, Mrs. Danby; an old gentlewoman has bought it, who is a great invalid, and keeps her room, so she takes no pleasure in altering or improving; which some think a pity, but which I, for my part, am very glad of. Just about the house it's kept neat enough, but the rest looks very wild. However, I don't dislike it so; there is something in the gloomy wilderness of those dark, untrimmed walks and woods that harmonises with my feelings when I go there. You know I cannot express myself well,—but it seems *in tune* with my mind when I go there."

"It would be in tune with mine too," said she. "Thank you, Mr. Wilcox; I am very foolish about the Oaks. It is a pleasure to me to fancy them so."

"The whole country is altered to my eye in the same manner—the whole neighbourhood is grown very dull and gloomy. I could fancy the very cry of the hounds was different; but I don't often go a-hunting now."

"Don't you? You used to be so very fond of it!"

"Ah, Miss Wyndham! those were sweet autumn mornings when we rode out, and brushed away the dew from the sweet-hanging hazel and birches, as we cantered over the turf through the copses, the huntsman's horn sounding, and the cry of the dogs! Do you remember how fond you used to be of those sounds—and the many pretty lines we used to repeat to one another as we rode along? I often think that heaven itself cannot be better than that used to be; but it's all changed now."

"You must not remind me of such things, Mr. Wilcox," said she, her colour rising. "I was made for the woods; and now I live in this great town, I do not venture even to think of them. I am in danger of that disease which, I believe, the sailors feel, who are perishing of drought at sea, and the green savannah, and the limpid fountains swim before them. Let us talk of something else. Do you amuse yourself well in town?"

"Pretty well—for somehow or other I know a good many people; but I care very little for shows and pictures. My principal pleasure is riding up and down the Park. I go to a good many parties of an evening; and I go to the play most nights. I was always very fond of a good play."

"I have not seen one since I came to London."

"What a pity is that! You would enjoy a good play, with your fine taste for these things. But why do you not go?"

"Mr. Danby is so much occupied that he has no time to go with me," said she. "That is the only reason, I believe."

"Ah, Mrs. Danby, might I be so happy! And I dare say," said he, suddenly brightening at the idea, "I really might, sometimes, be of use to you. I know that you fine ladies cannot

walk about this great town, or go to see any of these things without the attendance of some gentleman, who is so idle he has nothing else to do. Now, that is just my case, if you would only make use of me."

"Thank you, Mr. Wilcox, you are always so obliging and kind. If you are not particularly engaged at this very moment, I feel much inclined to profit by your good will. Would you take a turn with me in Kensington Gardens? I very much wish to walk there, and particularly dislike to go in quite by myself."

The brightest ray of pleasure which had been seen there since the fatal morning of Miss Wyndham's marriage danced in Johnny's eyes.

"You cannot mean to be so extremely good! Will you really allow me the great pleasure of a walk with you? It will be like old times. Here—this gate—this is where we must go in. Stay—let me have the pleasure of handing you from your carriage. Take care of your beautiful white dress against the wheel. I remember you always used to like to be in white."

They entered the gardens.

It was a warm, sultry day, and the heavy, magnificent trees flung their dark shadows upon the shining grass, and bright, glittering waters. Numbers of people were in the gardens, which were echoing with the music of the bands. It was a gay and beautiful scene, as it ever is.

"I always think this the most beautiful thing about London, after all," said the denizen of the woods; "there is nothing, in my opinion, the least to be compared with this. It puts one in mind of the Oaks. I could fancy I was at the Oaks."

Emilia smiled. "The Oaks was never so well peopled, except by the rooks, and doves, and singing-birds. I cannot say that it is very like the Oaks, and I cannot say that I like it quite so well; but it is very pleasant."

She endeavoured to keep up a conversation with her companion, but her eye was wandering over the gardens all the while, in search of some one—in vain.

She glanced through every brilliant group; she examined every party sitting upon the benches; she stood watching those who passed and repassed before the band—those she sought were not there.

"I should like to get more into the shade," said she, "the sun is so hot and glaring."

And she led the way to a more retired part of the garden. In vain! She was about to quit it in despair, and to return to the carriage; when, sitting upon a solitary bench under a tree, she found those she was in search of.

In a beautiful dress of lilac silk, richly trimmed with the finest lace, her delicate bonnet covered with a veil which softened every feature, and half hid the dark beauty of her hair, she sat, her head bent down and half averted, apparently employed in watching and playing with her little pet dog; his neck was adorned with a crimson riband and bow, to which a long riband

was attached, which she held in her hand and kept swinging up and down, her eyes bent all the time upon the beautiful and wilful little animal—but leaning over the bench behind her, his arms folded and resting upon it, was one who seemed anxiously and earnestly addressing her not unwilling ear.

The tall, elegant figure, and the handsome, but to her most unpleasing, face, were recognised at once.

Emilia did not hesitate a moment, but quickened her pace and advanced.

She had neither false shame nor false timidity.

She stepped hastily and courageously up to interrupt the conversation, with—

“I have been searching for you in every place, Lisa; your carriage is waiting, and one of your children is not well.”

Lisa started up—coloured—did not seem to know whether to look ashamed, angry, in defiance, or in submission.

“Surely you are not going away so soon this heavenly day!” drawled the Duke, looking at her languidly, but in a manner rather dictating than beseeching; “you will not—I am sure you will not.”

He looked up as he spoke; and, to the surprise of Emilia, after a slight salute to herself, nodded to her companion, with—

“Ha, Wilcox! how long have you been in town?”

Then turning again to Mrs. Lenox, in a sort of haughty defiance, as it were, of Emilia, he began again to plead for a little further delay.

Lisa looked uncertain. She rose up—hesitated—sat down again, with—

“It is very sweet! But, indeed, I ought to go—indeed, I must go.”

Which kind of hesitation was speedily put an end to by Emilia placing her hand resolutely under her own, and saying,—

“You will come with me, I am sure, Lisa,” in a low, but determined voice: “I am certain you will not refuse to come with me. Mr. Wilcox, which way must we go to the carriage?”

And taking his arm, she dragged, rather than drew, Mrs. Lenox away.

The young nobleman rose indolently from his seat, and took the place by Mrs. Lenox’s side.

“I suppose I may see you out of the gardens?” said he; and whispering, yet scarcely condescending to heed whether he was overheard or not—

“What, in the name of Heaven! can give that Chancery Lane woman a right to meddle with you?”

“It’s Emilia!” said Mrs. Lenox, hurried and confused: “I am always used to do what Emilia says.”

“Upon all possible occasions?” he asked, looking at her, and smiling.

“Yes, upon all. Don’t tease me now. For goodness’ sake, go away now. I am so nervous and uncomfortable, don’t speak to me. I am sick of the very sound of your voice.”

“Very well—I will not trouble you to hear it; but I suppose

I may see you to your carriage?—or must I surrender all my pretensions to that young gentleman, who, just redeemed from the woods, seems already more successful in his enterprises than my most unfortunate self?"

She laughed and looked at Mr. Wilcox.

And so they walked out of the gardens and reached the carriage and after placing them in, with much assiduity, the gentlemen re-entered the gardens, and the ladies pursued their drive.

"I wish I knew who that quiz—whether old maid or young wife—might be, who has gained such a nonsensical influence over Mrs. Lenox," said the Duke, half aloud, half to himself. "Perhaps," he added, turning carelessly round, "you, Wilcox, who seem to be in such high favour, will please to expound the matter to me?"

"I don't suppose it would enlighten you, Duke, very much, if I were to tell you her maiden name. She was a Miss Wyndham, of the Oaks, and once the beauty of our country. She married a man much older than herself. We used to be very well acquainted in former days. She often rode to the meet."

"And you with her, lucky fellow, no doubt! I could find in my my heart to be envious, if your 'Delia' were not so horrid ugly."

The colour flew into Mr. Wilcox's cheek, but he had discretion enough not to debate a matter of taste; so he made no reply.

The Duke lounged idly along. Presently he said,—

"Mrs. Lenox lived in that neighbourhood before her marriage, I think; so I suppose this most incongruous association of Chancery Lane and Grosvenor Street arises from some bread-and-butter friendship or other. It's very pretty to see the constancy of you country people; but faith, Johnny, I thought you had a better taste."

"You know I do not pretend to be a judge of these things. I have ridden side by side with Miss Wyndham ever since she was nine years old. I always thought her very handsome, and I think her so still; but I never cared so much about beauty as some do."

"Well, Master Wilcox, if you are inclined to play the part of a friend by me, I may do as good a turn by you some day or other. The next time she goes a-hunting with you, put her on the wrong scent—that's all—for she's likely to be desperately in my way."

"Whatever Emilia Wyndham happens to be in pursuit of, I know to be a just and worthy object, and I shall always help her in everything in which she may employ me, and to the very best of my power—and so now, Duke, you understand me, and I wish you a good morning."

And Mr. Wilcox, leaving a companion he neither loved nor respected, was soon upon his horse, going slowly down Rotten Row, and meditating upon the unexpected rencontres of the morning.

The Duke, too well bred and too well disciplined to fret or go into a passion when he was baffled, just hummed the resemblance of a tune, as he walked away to his carriage, while the following scene was passing between Emilia and Lisa.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

*Patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude.—MILTON.*

"FRIENDS get officious," said Lisa, falling back in her carriage as soon as the gentlemen were gone, and looking as black as midnight. "I wonder whose pleasure it is to set you as a spy upon me?"

"My own," said Emilia.

"Then I wish you would learn not always to consult your own pleasure. Once for all, I tell you, I do not like it."

"You must forgive an old friend—almost a mother, Lisa. I presume with you, I know; but not all your offended looks, be angry as you will, shall make me play the false and traitorous part of hiding that truth which I ought to tell you."

"Truth! I'm quite sick of your truths. I have heard nothing from your lips but truths, as you call them, these hundred years. I wish, for the sake of variety, you would indulge me with a few pleasant lies—that would be quite refreshing."

"Then I will," said Emilia. "You are perfectly right to please yourself in everything you do, and to disregard the wishes of your husband and the counsels of your friends; for what concern has anything so perfectly enchanting and beautiful as you are with right and wrong—duty, propriety, or any such antiquated stuff?"

"You are perfectly justified—you, the wedded wife of another man—perfectly justified, because that man is peevish, careless, and, I own it, unkind to you, in seeking revenge by casting aside every consideration of prudence and honour, and flinging yourself, with reckless defiance, into that awful and destroying fire—fire far more dreadful than the flames of the stake—the unholy devouring fire of sin! Of course no one can deny that to gratify your just resentment, young, and thoughtless, and inexperienced as you are—that you are perfectly justified in trusting yourself with one, notorious as a flatterer, a liar, and a betrayer—that you are quite justified—you, the mother of infant children, in blemishing, by your careless indifference, your own reputation and your husband's name—that name which must descend to those children. Yes, Lisa. You would not listen to my unpleasant truths—listen to my pleasant falsehoods."

Her colour was high. She spoke warmly—almost passionately. To find her thus trifling with her own good name and fame—standing upon the very brink of the most dangerous of precipices—tampering with all that was evil, merely to revenge herself upon one who, in spite of his faults, she knew had deserved a better fate—excited her indignation to a degree that she neither felt the power nor the desire to express.

For once, she would try what the energetic expression of truth undisguised might do.

"Don't speak to me in that ironical manner, if you please," was Lisa's haughty reply. "I am not used to it, and won't

bear it. I've enough of that, from your charming Lenox. I'm not going to take it from you."

"You know you are wrong, and that makes you so impatient of reproof, Lisa. But, good Heavens, what a contemptible wretch should I be if I could soften the matter to you now!"

"Soften or not soften, just as you please. I hope I can take care of myself. I am neither a child nor a fool; and if I choose to amuse the hours which *he* throws upon my hands in my own way, I don't see that *he*, or any one else, has a right to reprove me for it."

"Amuse yourself! Good Heavens, what an amusement, Lisa! Dear, innocent—still innocent Lisa, for the love of Heaven think what you are about; think of your pretty children—of your husband—of yourself—your reputation—your father—and your Emilia."

"Well, don't I think of them? You don't think I am going to run away with this man, I suppose?"

"Heaven forbid! But this I do think, that you are ruining your good name—you are forfeiting the esteem of your husband—you are forgetting your children—you are neither mother, wife, nor friend, under the influence of this fatal infatuation; and yet, thanks be to Heaven! you care no more for that man than for the idlest flatterer that ever handed you from your carriage. Oh, Lisa! will you peril the loss of Lenox for ever, for the sake of such a creature as that?"

"Lenox! Lenox! Lenox!—Oh yes, I know very well, it's all Lenox. You care for his little finger aching more than for the whole of me. I might be as bad as I pleased, and much you would care, if Lenox's honour and happiness were not in jeopardy! You need not be afraid for me. I'll take care of myself; but, thank Heaven! as you say, and I do most fervently thank Heaven, his honour is in my keeping if his happiness be not; and I'll make him quake for *that*, at least, before I have done with him."

"This is too shocking—too shocking, indeed!" was Emilia's reply.

She really could say no more.

They arrived at the door of Colonel Lenox's house in silence. When the carriage stopped, Emilia, for the first time, felt that she did not like to enter without an invitation; yet she *longed* to go up stairs and visit the children. It was true one of them was seriously ill.

Lisa got out—Emilia remained seated.

"Ask Mrs. Danby," said Lisa to her footman, "whether she wishes to go home, or whether she will not just come in for five minutes."

Emilia followed her into the drawing-room. Lisa shut the door, then turning round, said,—

"I know I have done wrong. I beg your pardon for my passion, Emilia, but don't speak ill of *him*—I can't bear it. Faults he may have—sinful he may be; but he loves me, and that is what none of the rest of you do, I believe," she added, bitterly.

"Not even ?" said Emilia, kindly putting her arm round Lisa's waist. "Oh, Lisa! forgive me if I spoke roughly and plainly; perhaps," said she, smiling, yet sadly, "I have learned it from Mr. Danby, who never disguises what he thinks ought to be known. But I cannot bear to hear you talk so. *He* love you, who is luring you to destruction! He puts me in mind of that story we read when children, of a fair apparition that appeared to men in the woods, and tempted them forward till they fell over a precipice, and perished. He loves you in that way, believe me, Lisa."

But it is wearisome to repeat arguments pleaded over and over again, and equally pleaded in vain.

After a long, fruitless effort, Emilia, anxious to visit the child, proposed to go into the nursery.

The poor little boy was very ill, and was sitting upon nurse's knee, leaning his feverish head and hot face against her bosom.

"What's the matter with my pretty fellow?" said Emilia, who went immediately up to him; while Lisa, struck with a sudden pang of remorse, such as she had never felt before, stood looking darkly at a little distance, and did not utter a word.

The poor boy raised his languid head, signed with his little hand, and said, "Mamma!"

The infant, just then brought in by the under-nurse, spread forth its little arms, and crowed to come to her.

Lisa glanced at Emilia—kneelt down by the poor, sick child, seeming ready to devour him with kisses—then rose, caught up the baby, and huddled it to her bosom—her colour coming and going, her gestures passionate, her tears struggling into her eyes.

And yet that very night all was again forgotten—at a splendid concert which she was attending: she had eyes, she had ears, but for one.

When Emilia entered her own house, late, as was now too often the case, she found, as usual, her father and her husband in the little drawing-room waiting her return for dinner.

She had run hastily up stairs, provoked again to be after her time, and yet, in the complication of her duties and interests, finding it impossible to regret that she had been away so long. She entered with the pretty, elegant bonnet upon her head which Susan had provided, and looking so well dressed and so handsome, that she was scarcely to be known again.

The eyes of her father gazed upon her with a quite new pleasure, as he said,—

"I protest, Emily, I shouldn't know you again, you look so different; just as you used to do at the Oaks, before your poor mother went away. I never thought you were quite the person—it has puzzled me many a time in bed to think—were you the person, or were you *not* the person—so grave, so pale, so ugly, and so dowdy, as you have been looking. But now I see you *are* the person, you *are* my handsome Emily again. So come and give your poor father a kiss, for I am so glad of it."

She gave him a hasty kiss upon the forehead, and then went up to her husband with—

"Will you be so very good as to forgive me again, Mr. Danby? indeed, I am quite ashamed to take such advantage of your patience and indulgence."

"Are you, indeed?" he said, fixing upon her his deep, penetrating eye.

"Indeed and indeed I am," she replied, stretching out her hand to the bell. "Pray, Sally let us have dinner. Shall I have time to take off my bonnet, or will you be so good as to excuse me as I am?"

He sat in his large chair, his eyes following every gesture; he thought in the whole course of his life he had never seen her look so charming: every succeeding day, in truth, was adding to her charms. Occupied with those serious interests which took her out of herself—satisfied with her own heart—at peace with her own conscience—every day feeling more and more at ease with her husband—and that very consciousness giving an inexpressible grace to her manner with him—the sweet fresh air and pleasant exercise she enjoyed restoring the bloom to her cheek—softening and rendering her more interesting than she had ever been in her best days—Emilia was indeed a charming creature, let the Duke say what he would.

You may imagine the horrible struggle of feeling within Mr. Danby's heart—more than ever enchanted, more than ever fascinated, by that charm which exercised such inconceivable influence over him—and yet resisting every sentiment of tenderness, under the conviction that all that fatal loveliness which he sickened with very delight at beholding sprang from the influence of, and was lavished upon, another.

That every one of these visits—from which she returned refreshed, and in all the pure brightness of an innocent heart—was only a step in the progress of that fatal alienation from himself which might fatally terminate—he shuddered to think how.

He was sitting with an envelope closed, but the seal broken in his hand, and looking serious; but as one who had made up his mind to the passive endurance of every evil that could be heaped upon him, he said,—

"I have to beg your pardon, Emilia; I very inadvertently, this morning, opened this envelope. I know not why it was sent up with my letters to my chambers; it was not till I had broken the seal that I found it was for you."

Emilia opened it—there was a card of invitation, and a tiny note in Lisa's hand.

"Now, Emilia, you positively *shall* indulge me this time. That old hobgoblin of yours must learn reason. This is to be such a fête as has not been seen this season!—no, nor for ten thousand seasons! It is in the morning, too: that is, it begins in the morning—with a breakfast at S—House, and in the evening there will be a masquerade at the Argyle Rooms. Captain Greville is a delightful creature to let us have one—Isn't he? It will, I tell you, be such a thing as never was seen before. And now you *will* come—I see you looking so good, and so refusing; but tell Mr. Danby I will kill him if he does not let you come: but he's such an ill-natured old hunk, I dare say he won't.

"The card is——" said Mr. Danby; "but you need not tell me; I read the card—but be easy—I did *not* read the note."

And he could not help looking as if he very much wished to read it.

"Lisa writes in such a nonsensical manner," said Emilia blushing and putting the note into the fire, "that I am really ashamed to let any one see her letters."

But the eyes of Mr. Danby were fixed upon the paper as it caught the flame, curled, blazed up—vanished. He made a sort of snatch, as if he would have saved it; but she did not see this, and he sank back again into the chair.

"Well," at last he said, after a few moments' silence, "of course you wish to go?"

"Not, I am sure," said Emilia, with much gentleness, "if you wish me not to go."

Dear good Emilia! was that *quite* true?

"I wish," he said, peevishly, "it were possible to make you speak the truth at once. Cannot you say that you do not care a d— for me or my wishes, and that you have determined within yourself to go? You know I always did hate these womanly manoeuvres; why, in the name of all that's good, must you for ever be trying them upon me!"

"Well, I think that's a very cross speech, Mr. Danby," said poor Mr. Wyndham, whose eyes had opened wide at this address, and at the harsh, angry manner in which it was uttered. "I don't know what is come to you of late; but I think you are grown very cross with my poor Emilia—and with me too—and, perhaps, it is that you are tired of us both; and so let us go away again to the Oaks; for if you don't want us, I'm quite sure we neither of us want you."

"Hush! hush! my dear beloved father!" cried Emilia in the greatest distress; but he would not be silenced.

"I can't bear to hear it," he went on—"and you looking so pretty in that nice new bonnet! and so good-natured as you always are—I will say *that*—and he to take you up in that cross way—I don't like it, Mr. Danby—I don't like it. I'm but a poor creature, I know; but I'm her father, and I don't like it."

"You need not be so anxious to stop his mouth, Emilia—he at least speaks the truth; it may be bitter—but at least it is sincere. Nay, sir—speak out—you think me cross as you call it—and unkind to your daughter—I dare say I am—"

"No, that I am sure you never intend to be, if it were not for this fatal habit of misunderstanding everything I say and do. I do not know what I have done to displease you so much: perhaps you think that I am too much away from home; but if you knew—if I could tell you—"

"To be sure," said Mr. Wyndham, "if she could tell you—why, to be sure—*that's* the company she has been used from her childhood to keep. We always kept such company at the Oaks—and I never yet have exactly understood why we don't keep it now. Don't cry and don't look so vexed, Emilia; I never did understand it, I say. Why we are always here, and with com-

pany so unfit for us—and that Mrs. Lenox too, that I hear you talking of—there was a Colonel Lenox too, your poor mother's nephew or cousin—I remember all about it—I can't think why you *never* mention him."

Emilia's face was now crimson with agitation and distress. *He* read in it the hue of conscious guilt.

"My dear, dear father! do not talk so; you know we agreed never to talk of the Oaks; you know Mr. Danby is the kindest friend we ever had; you know this is our home—a very comfortable home for us both. And as for Colonel and Mrs. Lenox they are nothing to either of us now."

"A lie!" muttered Mr. Danby, between his teeth—not so loud, however, that the ungenerous sentence could be heard.

"Dinner is ready, please ma'am," said Sally, opening the door. And they all three went down into the dining-room—the question of the acceptance as yet undetermined.

Emilia was hurt at what had passed. Grieved, and almost offended, to perceive the effect which the childish and thoughtless prattle of her poor father produced upon her husband's temper, she thought it unworthy of him to resent upon her this incoherent talk. She little knew how much meaning it conveyed to his mind!

The only way in which this feeling, however, displayed itself was by a determination not to allude to the invitation again, and not to accept from Mr. Danby an indulgence it evidently displeased him so much to grant.

This was the most uncomfortable dinner they had yet passed together.

Mr. Danby was more moody than ever—Mr. Wyndham angry and muttering—Emilia herself displeased and cold.

This completed the sum of Mr. Danby's wretchedness. She was displeased—he saw it. He thought all the right was on his side—he believed her to be attempting to dupe and to betray him—yet she looked displeased, and for the first time—and he felt as much annoyed, and as much depressed, and almost as much afraid, as if there had not been the slightest cause for his distrust or resentment.

It was very well for you, Mr. Danby, that you fell into the hands of so high and generous a temper; a woman would have condescended to play tricks with you might have made you—sensible man, and determined man, and clever lawyer as you were—the veriest slave that ever bowed to the distaff.

She was far as heaven is above earth from such mean and dishonourable ways. She had so little female art in her composition, that she did not even surmise her power, as he sat eyeing her askance, and looking as if he did not know exactly what to do.

As soon as the dinner was over, and before the cloth was removed, he rose and went away. And the subject was not renewed in the evening.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day!—LONGFELLOW.

THE next morning no carriage came for Emilia. It had happened so once or twice before; but after the conversation of yesterday, she could not but think it ominous, and feel uneasy and disappointed.

The note accompanying the card she saw was dated two evenings before, and had been left in Chancery Lane, according to the convenience of one of Colonel Lenox's servants, late in the following day. Its tone, therefore, was no proof of the present disposition of its fair inditer. Emilia wished to thank her for the kindness of endeavouring to procure her the pleasure which, as far as the morning party was concerned, she could not help very much desiring to share. She was anxious to see Lisa in society, to judge for herself of her situation and manners; for though her remonstrances had yesterday been so ill received, still she could not think it possible that they would be altogether disregarded.

She was walking up and down her little room meditating upon all these things, when she heard horses coming up the street, and a knock at the door.

Sally appeared, the bearer of a gentleman's card—Mr. Wilcox. "Oh! show him up immediately."

Mr. Wilcox, hat in hand, and the colour as of former times in his face, now entered the room.

He was not quite yet master enough of himself to meet Emilia without emotion; but he struggled hard with his feelings, and in a few seconds looked as he wished to do.

He could not, however, forbear glancing round the apartment as he sat down. How cheerless it was!

Two very small windows, of the worst possible glass, let in the light upon a small square room, wainscoted with a wood that had once been painted white, but which the long course of years had rendered tawny; a few mahogany-backed and black horse-hair-seated chairs were ranged round the room; a square table covered with a green cloth stood in the middle; one of those round concave glasses—invented, I cannot tell for what reason—was at one end, and a picture so black, that except for one or two brownish lights, it might have passed for no picture at all, was on the other. There were two large arm-chairs for the two gentlemen, and a small footstool of needlework, the property of Emilia; on the chimney-piece, a very pretty glass—a present from Susan—was, by Susan's care, daily replenished with fresh flowers. This was the only little object of taste in the room.

Emilia had, at the beginning of her marriage, felt too utterly depressed and miserable to take heed of external things; after-

wards, perhaps, she would have taken some interest in making this little den more cheerful and comfortable; but as Mr. Danby never chose to leave home, and seemed quite to dread the consequent disarrangement whenever painting or papering was alluded to, she had gradually abandoned the idea of it, till her eye had become, as every eye does become at last, accustomed to the dinginess of the scene about her, which nevertheless, had its effects upon her spirits.

Il y a toujours dans la dégradation un malheur sourd, dont l'on ne se rend pas compte.

And so it had been with her. She got accustomed to this sordid manner of living, but without accounting for it to herself, she was depressed by it.

Mr. Wilcox's glance round the room recalled to her the state of things about her. She smiled a little, and said,—

"We must not expect the Oaks in Chancery Lane, Mr. Wilcox."

"No, madam, certainly not," he said, still looking uneasily about him, ashamed of what he was doing, and not knowing exactly what to say.

"It is strange," she said, "and it is happy, how soon the eye accommodates itself. I had forgotten all this."

"I think it is a pity that when there are so many cheerful and pretty houses in this town, a man of Mr. Danby's fortune does not—"

"He likes to live near his chambers. Have you been into the Park this morning?"

"No: as soon as I mounted my horse, I came down to pay my respects here."

"Then you have not chanced to see Mrs. Lenox this morning?"

"No, Mrs. Danby: I wanted very much—if I might take the great liberty—to speak to you upon the subject of Mrs. Lenox."

"Say on," said Emilia.

"Are you acquainted with the character of the young nobleman whom we found sitting by her in Kensington Gardens yesterday, and do you think that she can possibly be—"

"I do not know much of him, of course; I have only seen him once or twice. What I have heard of him was not in his favour. I do not know why I should have been surprised, but I *was* surprised to see him acknowledge you as an acquaintance."

"I told you that I had got to know many people, some way, since my poor mother's and father's deaths. I have had nothing else to do, and have gone a good deal into company. But I used to meet the Duke of C— down in Herefordshire, at the meets; he was always fond of pursuing something; now it would be a fox—now a pursuit not quite so innocent."

He stopped a little; then leaning forward, he said, very seriously,—

"Nothing could possibly grieve me more than to see that beautiful creature, Mrs. Lenox, drawn into an acquaintance with him—I mean such an acquaintance as there appeared to

be yesterday. I am sure, if she knew the tears that man has caused to be shed, she would have more care not to become a new victim to his rage for conquest; and I much wonder that Colonel Lenox, who ought to know better, allows the acquaintance. I do happen—which seems odd, moving in such different circles as we seem to do—I do happen to know a good deal of that young man. I am sure any of the details would be disgusting and painful to you; but, indeed, indeed, Mrs. Danby, you ought to set her upon her guard against him!”

“I have heard something of this,” said Emilia, more and more alarmed. “I believe Colonel Lenox—”

“Can Colonel Lenox possibly be aware of this intimacy, and not forbid it? Indeed, Mrs. Danby, I am astonished at what you tell me. Colonel Lenox, married to so very beautiful—and, forgive me, for you are her friend—so very, very careless—a young lady as Miss Hesketh used to be, ought to be more careful what acquaintance he allows her to form. I am astonished at him! He is a man who knows the world—he must be infatuated—I am astonished at him!”

“It is indeed very wrong, *if* he knows—”

“If!—oh, Mrs. Danby! the matter is too notorious. He knows—he must know. I thought he was a man of honour—what must we think of him?”

Emilia was excessively shocked: there was something terrible in seeing the subject thus presented. Her indignation and grief were nearly equal. How could he, indeed—how could Colonel Lenox, the man she had once known so different—how could he have become so dreadfully changed, so blind to his first duties, so cruelly negligent of the virtue and happiness of the young creature committed to his guardianship?

“I am not much of a judge of these things,” said Mr. Wilcox; “but to me it appears a most heartless and unprincipled thing to see any creature, far more one’s own wife, trifling on the very brink of destruction, and not to snatch her from it, cost what it might.”

“There can be no doubt of it,” said Emilia, and she sighed; “but I should doubt whether Colonel Lenox is aware to the full extent of the risk his wife is running, and which, indeed, terrifies me very much. Perhaps you do not know that he has been out of town for the last ten days, and is not expected to return till next Tuesday—the evening before this splendid breakfast to which all the world is going. I do not believe—indeed, I cannot believe—that he is become so utterly heartless and unprincipled as his conduct would seem to imply.”

“Perhaps not. I did not know that he had been so long out of town. I have judged him hastily, I see. Indeed I cannot conceal from you the indignation with which I scarcely can help looking upon many things that I see going on in this great world. What a different world from what we were acquainted with in former days, Mrs. Danby! I should be thought a sad, simple Cymon—a mere wild man of the woods—if people knew how much I am disgusted and offended by what I hear

going on. I don't know how it is, but I hear a good deal one way or other. I believe people in general think me a soft, simple sort of fellow, only good to play the part of confidant. But I hope you are to be of this breakfast, Mrs. Danby—you would really enjoy it; it will remind you of old days. You can have no conception of the beauty of these gardens. Among other people, I happen to know the *millionaire* who owns them very well. It is really a most beautiful place. Shall you be there?"

"I do not know—I fear not."

"You have an invitation, no doubt; or might I be allowed—might I be so very happy—"

"I have a card; but I am not quite sure whether I shall not be under the necessity of refusing it."

"They are going to give a splendid masquerade at the Argyle Rooms on the same evening. Nothing at all like it, it is said, has been seen for many years. Did you ever see the young cub, Mrs. Danby, to whose coming of age all this festivity is dedicated?"

"No, never: I have no personal acquaintance with the family."

"The servility of the great world of fashion is one of those things that surprises me. This man is excessively, incalculably rich, I am told; but then how has he made his money? By means very questionable and exceptionable, I understand—certain contracts. Now, I chance to know something of his execution of these contracts: however, his wife was an old friend of my mother's, and she is very kind to me. But bless me, Mrs. Danby, when I think of the way this man's money, I am afraid, was made, it does surprise me to see the influence he exercises, merely *through* his money, for he has no personal good qualities; and to see the crowds of people of fashion, as they are called, who frequent her assemblies—who, but a few short years ago, would not have admitted her across their threshold—merely because she possesses the most beautiful place within twenty miles of London! And as for that vulgar son—if you were to see the beautiful, elegant creatures that are flattering him, and smiling in his face, and seeming actually ready to hunt him down—I"

"My dear Mr. Wilcox," said Emilia, with a smile, "even I shall begin to think you very *young* to wonder at this, and, still more, to think it peculiar to this age or to this town. As long as wealth can purchase luxury, and men continue selfish and luxurious, the man of wealth will find that he can buy consideration, as well as other good things. It is a pity a line cannot be drawn between ill-gotten wealth and wealth the reward of honest industry and energetic enterprise, which has a just right to claim distinction; but I suppose that cannot be."

"But I hope you will be of the breakfast, Mrs. Danby."

"I do not think that I shall. Pray let us think no more of it."

She did not, certainly, believe that she should; for, since her last mention of the subject, Mr. Danby had seemed more gloomy and uncomfortable than ever; and she—for she was not *quite* an angel—had felt too much hurt to venture to trust herself to

speak upon the subject again. But a most unexpected auxiliary came into the field—one whose power, when she chose to exert it, was almost unlimited; though usually, like most possessors of this sort of unacknowledged authority, she was very prudent in the exercise of it.

CHAPTER L.

La simplicité nous présente l'image de la vérité.—VAUVENARGUES.

MR. DANBY was sitting in his chambers, engaged, as he too often now was, rather with endeavouring to attend than really attending to the business before him, when a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Danby.

The door opened, and Susan appeared.

She came in, erect, vigorous, and spirited as usual, dressed in her best bonnet and cloak—not in marketing trim, but spruce, and as if she had been upon a visit—her gaunt figure and strongly-marked face set off to advantage by the dress which she wore.

"Are you at liberty, sir?" said she.

"Yes, if you have anything to say to me," said her master, pushing away the papers before him with an air of weariness.

Glad, indeed, to be relieved from the fatigue of forcing attention, and to have his mind diverted from painful thought by any means.

"Sit down, Susan, and let us hear what you have to say."

Thus invited, she took a chair, and settled herself comfortably upon it, as if preparing for a sociable chat, and began,—

"I have just taken the liberty to call upon you, Mr. Matthew, about that little affair of my brother's, which you were so good as for to say you would set to rights for him. It's but a mite of a business for such a great lawyer as you are to concern himself about; but I'm sure we are all the more obliged to you. But, bless my stars, how ill you do look!"

Mr. Danby, it is true, did look very ill: he was gradually losing flesh, and he was, in truth, become almost a skeleton. His nights were restless; his meals without appetite; the disorder of his mind was gradually producing its slow but sure effect in paralysing every function; and the vital frame was consuming away under the influence of that mysterious but now unfed flame which animates and finally destroys this tabernacle of clay.

This day he was more unhappy than usual, because he had been quarrelling with himself. It had been his proud determination to conceal his sufferings—to yield the point without further contest—to abandon himself to the slow operations of his silent despair. Sometimes his thoughts even went so far as to the idea of releasing her. He felt he was a weight upon the life, an obstacle to the happiness, of the being he adored so passionately; and he often wished to have done with it, and that his disappointments and his sufferings, unknown to all the

world, should be hidden in that dark grave which to him was as a last asylum.

He had resolved not to interfere with those plans or those engagements which made him so miserable. I believe I have said this before. And now he had suffered his temper to get the better of him—his irritation to betray itself by the most harsh and unreasonable speeches. She was offended, and with cause.

He was angry with himself, displeased with her, miserable at the idea of the unread note, and of the invitation, which his jaundiced eye represented in every way that could render him the most uncomfortable.

In spite of all Emilia's endeavours to persuade him to eat, he had left his untasted breakfast on his plate, and had retired to his chambers, leaving her in a state of uneasiness not to be described.

"My stars!" said Susan, "how ill you do look!"

"Do I?" said he. "Well, I believe I am not very well; but let us understand this business of your brother's. How was it? I think you said—"

"The business of my brother's, sir," said Susan, still looking anxiously at him, and seeming to forget the purpose of her visit in some new interest, "that can wait a little for your leisure; for you do look so ill, that I am sure you don't seem fit for no business at all."

"Never mind my looks, Susan: go on with what you came about."

"Oh, Mr. Matthew, Mr. Matthew!" shaking her head, "I am but a poor servant, and perhaps it's not for me for to speak; and yet, when I see you so wan, and thin, and wretched-looking like, it's hard for me, who love you almost as well as the mother who bore you, to hold my peace, as perhaps in reverence and duty I ought for to do; but it is enough to make one mad to see you a-flinging away your own and that good young creature's happiness, all in a sort of a mazy like, just as if people knocked their heads together in the dark."

"Her happiness!" said Mr. Danby, "I have never had anything to do with her happiness."

"That's all that fine book-novel talk, that I'm ashamed for to hear a wise man, like you, master, a-using. 'Her happiness!' says he. And if you don't go for to make her happiness, pray tell us who is?"

Susan was privileged, and she felt that she was; but she had long sought in vain for an opportunity of clearing up what she thought her young master's mistakes, and she was resolved not to lose the one thus opened to her; so she went on:—

"I love mistress, you know, sir—odd if I didn't, when we have lived together one-and-forty years come Michaelmas. We've had our fallings-out and our fallings-in, but never heed that. I love missis, and I love you; and save that brother of mine, in that big place yonder over seas—I never can remember its proper name, for I don't like to use its bad one of Botany Bay—save him—and I never saw him since I was ten years

nave you been lately, to add so much to your stock of worldly experience? Pray let me have it all out, now you have begun," said her master, whose attention and interest were excited in spite of himself.

"Why, sir, my brother's wife's niece, who do you think she should be, and where do you think she should be, but under-nurse to Mrs. Lenox, that beautiful angel, who is our Mrs. Matthew's bussum-friend?"

"Well?"

"And I've been to see her, sir, once or twice, by her own invitation, to drink tea in the nursery. The girl's a-looking after my savings, I warrant; but they're not for her. However, that's neither here nor there; but she's very civil, and so is head-nurse, who's a very nice, respectable woman; and so I've been there once or twice to tea. And, my stars! but what a different way of going on there it is!"

"Different from what?" he asked, his attention more and more arrested, till he fairly laid down his pen, rested his elbow on the table, and his head upon his hand, and fixed his eyes upon Susan's face;—"how different?"

"Why, from our ways of going on. My stars! why, it's like being in heaven!—all so light, and so fair, and so beauteous to behold! I don't think King Solomon himself had a fairer palace than that there. They took me for to see the house: why, the rooms be so big, you hardly know where to find yourself in them; and all hung with silks, and satins, and velvets, and such-like—blue, and yellow, and scarlet, like a pomegranate—and grand with picters and statues, in great burnished gold frames. And then, lo and behold! there's another room at the end of it, just as big and just as grand; and when you go for to enter into it, what is it but a looking-glass from top to bottom of the room—a wall of real looking-glass, like! And there all the fine things are figured over again; and then, what they call them diamond glittering things, a-hanging from the roof of the room, all sparkling like dew-drops in a rainbow; and the windows all open, looking on that vast and most sumptuous park, with its green trees, so fair and magnificent, and the blue sky shining like heaven over head, and the sun beaming so bright, and all the pother of beautiful carriages and beautiful ladies a-going by! It's not to be believed, Mr. Matthew, how beautiful it all is; and from top to bottom of that house it's all and altogether just the same—every chamber is so fair and sumptuous: one is blue and silver, and one is green and gold, and one pink, like a moss-rose, and another is crimson, like a peony; and it's all as one like a palace of the queen of flowers, if such a queen there ever was; but I believe *that's* only a tale."

"Well, Susan, and what has all this grand house to do with us?"

"Why, sir, in my poor opinion, it's a great deal to do with us. Sir, when I saw all these fine and beauteous things, says I to the maid, 'And does your missis always *live* here or is

this for company, like, and show?" "To be sure, said she, 'she lives here: all fine ladies live in this way.' And then I began to say to myself, 'That's the way, I'll be bound, then, my young missis lived afore she was married to our Matthew!'"

"Not quite in such a splendid style as that, Susan, but something like it; but I think she has too much sense to care for such trifles."

"Sir, they ben't altogether trifles. Habit's a second nature, as I've heard say. And now, what I'm coming to is this—and that's all I *am* coming to—when missis said she hated you, because she looked pale and wan, as she did, I never thought she *did* hate you, for I was very sure she couldn't. Who could hate *you*, Master Matthew, who are both wise and good, and very kind too, when you only think of it? But that, by-the-bye, is your fault—you don't always think of it. But who's to hate you—who ever did? much less such a gentle lamb as this, as wouldn't hate a fly. But, now, only think—and why didn't we none of us ever think of it?—I'm sure I, for one, could cry my eyes out to think of it now I know—only think of taking that pretty young creature, so used to green trees, and blue skies, and flowers, and light, and pink, blue, and crimson, and a-shutting her up with two old men and two cross old women, in a little pokey hole like our street there, or this, which is fur and fur worse! I did put some jessamine and roses-paper up *there*, and that was something. And then, forsooth, we must quarrel with her because she looks pale! I'll tell you what, master—did you ever see a geranium put up in the cellar to keep it from the frost in the winter, without air or the blessed sun upon it, and see how it comes out in the spring, like?"

Mr. Danby sighed, but there was comfort in the sigh. Susan's harangue filled him with a mixed sensation of pleasure and of pain.

"Go on," he said, with deepening interest in his manner.

"The worst comes last: what missis is an angered at, and what has angered you—I know it has—has been to see, lo and behold! she so wan and pale, when with us, perks up and blooms out as beautiful as the morning when that Mrs. Lenox comes to town. Now, master, it's a wicked thing to envy her that, poor young creature—her friend and school-child like, as I hear she is—and she a-taking her out in her pretty little carriage, like Cinderella's mice and pumpkins for all the world, and giving the poor, whitened plant fresh air and pleasant exercise, and light, and company. Why, it's like a fool not to suppose she would look happier! And pray who's in fault, an she does?"

"Why, it's your fault, and your mother's fault, and my fault, Master Matthew: we ought to ha' thought of all this before; we ought to ha' looked a little to see that she had what was as victuals and drink to her; and it was because she didn't bring a fortin' with her, perhaps—though, I say, such a face and such a temper is worth all the gold of Ophir, for my part—that missis, and perhaps you, and perhaps I, sir—I'm no better than

either of you—didn't think of providing her with costly things. She deserves to be wrapped in rose-leaves and miniver, that she does! And if that was so—and I'm greatly afeared so it was—why it was the dirtiest, nastiest, mean-spiritedest trick as was ever played in the world."

Mr. Danby started, as one struck to the heart; he rose from his chair, he took two or three hasty turns up and down the room; he resumed his seat, but he only said,—

"Go on, Susan. What would you have me do?"

"First and foremost, I'd not have you and missis spoil all the pleasure she *has*, poor thing, by looking as cross as crabs when she comes in again, and as if you begrudged her every pleasant hour she passed."

It was a relief to Mr. Danby to find that one secret, at least, his mother had had the discretion to conceal from Susan.

"But, more than that, if I were husband to so sweet a creature, I'd show her, that though I was a musty old bookworm myself, I loved that she should be brave and gay, like other men's wives; and so long as she did her duty by me, and her old father, and my mother, and all of us—and sure she does it like an angel by every one of us—and didn't come a-whimpering, and a-begging, and a-crying for this, and a-asking for that and t'other—I'd show her that I didn't forget to make her happy in her own nat'ral way, as she made me happy in mine; and I'd have her go out, and be a little gay, in moderation like—and she'd never exceed, I'll lay my life on't; and I'd open that pocket-book of mine, Master Matthew; *your* pocket-book is often too like your mother's, the snaps too hard in opening; and I'd take out a ten-pound note—ay, twenty, may-be, sometimes—and I'd say, 'You're going this and there, and you'd like to be nice, and I'd have you nice as the best, for who is better than you?' And I'd say, 'There, pretty one! go, and let me see you've bought yourself the very handsomest dress in Lunnun-town;' and see whether she'd look loving at you—not for your dirty note, Master Matthew, but for your thought and for your love. Love comes of love; but what's the use of a love that never shows itself in making folk happy, in their own nat'ral way, like?"

"Susan," said Mr. Danby, "I always thought you a very shrewd, sensible woman; but I did not give you credit before for such a just way of thinking. We have all been very wrong—as you say, most contemptibly mean, and most contemptibly selfish. It is too late to recover the ground we have lost," he added, with a sigh, "but not too late to contribute to her happiness. Did your mistress tell you of an invitation Mrs. Danby has received to some grand breakfast or another?"

"Yes, master, she did, in her grumbling way; and, la! how unreasonable missis is in some things! She really was vexed with young Mrs. Danby, because as how she looked as if she'd like to have gone. Now, I do say that's Turkish tyranny, that one mayn't even look as if one liked or didn't like—what one does or doesn't like!"

"Then you think she would like to go?"

"Ay, master, that's what I'm sure she would."

"Then she certainly *shall* go."

"Ay, sure! that's spoke like yourself; because, though, Master Matthew, 'honour your parents' is the first commandment with promise, yet 'leave father and mother, and cleave to your wife,' is as big, for it's a Christian commandment; and when parents be unreasonable, as the best of 'em may be, a man ought for to stand by his wife, and not to see her trampled on like; and I'm glad, and heartily glad, to her you speak up like a man, and say, 'Go she shall!' let your mother say what she will."

"My mother will make no objection, I am sure, Susan."

Susan looked desperately unbelieving, but she said no more on that head. She went on,—

"And then it's only half done: she *must* have a new dress. La, sir! you should have seen Mrs. Lenox's dress for this breakfast as is to be. Mrs. Henderson, the lady's maid, let us all step down from the nursery to see it this very day when I was there. First, it's of a muslin so fine, it's like spider-web—real Ingia, sir, worked with flowers—oh, so beautiful! a-twisting all over it for a yard from the bottom; and such loads and loads of real Brussels lace!"

"Never mind Mrs. Lenox's gown, Susan. What do I care for such nonsense?"

"You married men ought to learn for to care. It's not such nonsense, when it lets you pleasure a good wife: the best of women likes a new gown, take my word for it; and what would she be good for, pray, if she didn't? You'd not have her love to go all slip-slop, like yourself, I suppose? Well, now, you should learn to think a little of these things, because as how you're a husband, and you're not to live all and altogether for number one now, master, as when you were a bachelor, and had nobody on earth to heed but two old women, sharp enough to take care of theirselves. And as for Mrs. Lenox's pretty gown, I spoke of it for to mind you. She quarrels with her husband every day, and perhaps worse, if all tales be true; and he never heeds her much, I fear, but she's as brave as May-day; while here's your sweet, good, faithful, obedient, dutiful wife may stand and whistle long enough for a bit of real Brussels lace before any comes nigh *her*."

"Susan," said Mr. Danby, with more cheerfulness than had been in his tone and manner for a long time, the new ideas thus forced into his mind were so pleasant, "as you complain that my fingers are not so ready as they should be at opening the snap of my pocket-book, take pocket-book and all, and open the snap yourself, and do what seemeth you good with the contents. But stay," said he—for, obtuse as were his perceptions upon the articles of external decoration, it did suggest itself to his mind that Emilia's taste in dress and that of her advocate might not exactly suit, especially when he mentally contrasted Susan's bright crimson ribands, flaunting at the top of her gaunt face, and the elegance and propriety of Emilia's appear-

ance—"don't you think it will be best to offer the contents to Emilia, and desire her to choose for herself?"

"Why, sir, maybe it might; but it would be prettier done in my way. Now, sir, I once read a story—my stars! how fond I have been of stories in my young days! Many's a one I've read over and over again in my chimney-corner."

"And that's what makes you so romantic, Susan."

"Maybe so. Well, this story was called the 'Marry Silfe,'* and was out of the French, I think I've heard say. It was a story of a lady who didn't like the husband she was forced for to marry, and of all the pretty tricks he played to make her to love him. One was about a dress, just as this might be. She wanted for to go somewhere, and she thought her dress might do; and the 'Marry Silfe' got such a beautiful dress all made for her; and, lo and behold! when she asks for her dress, out comes this that he'd a-got in secret; and she was so pleased, you never saw the like! And for this and such-like, as the story said, she soon learned to love the 'Marry Silfe' better than all the world beside. Now, sir, I see plain enough you're thinking if the 'Marry Silfe' had had nobody better than such an old fogie as me for to choose his dressos, he'd better have let it alone; but I'm not going to be such a fool as to think of such a thing; but I'll just go to Mrs. Lenox's maid, Mrs. Henderson—she's a nice, discreet woman as ever you saw—and I'll say, 'Master wants for to surprise missis with a beautiful new dress for this breakfast'—and where's the harm of letting her into such a pretty secret as that, I wonder?—and she'll go with me to Maddam Devey's, or Maddam Dushion's, or Maddam This or T'other, and won't we get something suitable, and pretty, and good! not too fine—our dear missis will never love to be too fine—but something truly elegant for her, and proper for your wife to wear, Mr. Danby; for you're a gentleman, and a rich man, and a clever man, and why has not your wife a right to be nice?"

"Well, Susan, I must own I think you have profitted more by reading romances than most ladies, as I have heard said, do, and I think your plan is a *very* pretty one; so pray let it be carried into immediate execution, and get the dress as fast as you can, for fear I should let out the secret, for my head is like a sieve, you know, about secrets, Susan—it keeps the great ones, but it's a hard matter not to let the little ones drop through."

Where were all Mr. Danby's suspicions and jealousies vanished to? They had cleared away, like the morning mist, before Susan's wholesome, cheerful view of things.

The idea of giving pleasure, the scheme of the beautiful dress, flattered his affection and delighted his imagination. We know he had a corner of romance in his disposition; he and Susan alike had more of fancy than would ever have been supposed to hide itself under such uncouth outsides. But never mind the outside: wherever you detect a heart, be sure you will find a fancy in some odd corner or another of the character.

* "Le Mari Sylphe" of Marmontel, translated, no doubt.

CHAPTER LI.

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!
Healest thy wandering and distempered child;
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters!
Till he relent;
And, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonised.—COLERIDGE.

How pleasant it was to Emilia, when, that very day, Mr. Danby, returning home rather earlier than usual before dinner, went up to her room and knocked at the door and was immediately admitted! She was alone, as usual, and had just finished her little toilet to meet her husband at table.

He came up to her, looking rather shy and awkward, and as if he did not exactly know how to begin; but he took her hand, looked up into her face, and said—

"Emilia, I am afraid you have had lately a very ill-natured husband."

"Oh, Mr. Danby! how could you ever think I should imagine you to be ill-natured? But I have been very, very sorry to see you look so unhappy and ill!"

"You never seem to think any one cross or ill-natured," said he; "your father, however, thought me very cross, and I think I was as surly as a bear. Would you like to go to this breakfast, my dear?—it is very natural you should. Pray, write immediately, if it is not too late, and accept the invitation; and I hope you will enjoy yourself very much."

"How kind you are!" she exclaimed, with a look of delighted surprise, that quite enchanted him. "Yes, indeed, I should most particularly like to go to this breakfast: I have reasons why I very much desire it. Thank you, Mr. Danby. But are you prepared to learn the grievous sacrifice this good-nature will entail upon you that day? You must really, for the first time in your life, dine *tête-à-tête* with my father, and manage to do without me; for we shall be setting out for the breakfast about the same time that you are sitting down to dinner."

"Indeed!" said he; "what do they call it a breakfast for, then? But have I never sat down to dinner without you before?"

"Never; so I hope you will bear the terrible loss like a philosopher."

She was quite in spirits; her desire to go to this breakfast had become very great, as she reflected upon her conversation with Mr. Wilcox; and yet, as I have said, after what had passed upon the subject, she felt an invincible repugnance to making the request to Mr. Danby. To see it proposed to her in this kind and pleasant manner, to see him look so good-humoured and so comfortable, quite animated her spirits.

As for poor Mr. Danby, he was in the seventh heaven; her smiles, her looks of grateful pleasure, answered to Susan's agreeable prophecies; he felt that to confer happiness was not

so totally out of his power as in his depression he had imagined. And no evil genius was there to prompt the depressing reflection, that this very breakfast, on which her heart seemed set, was to carry her away from himself, and into the presence of another.

A few days passed over, and, as they passed over, only added to the anxieties of Emilia on her friend's account. The carriage usually came to fetch her, it is true, but there was little satisfaction in the meeting which ensued.

Emilia was anxious and grave, Lisa flighty and absent in her manner. The warnings that had been received from Mr. Wilcox were mentioned to her friend, but were answered with petulance, or received with a kind of haughty pride. Nothing seemed to offend Lisa more than the slightest doubt of her prudence and honour, while nothing was less satisfactory than her way of proceeding.

The poor little boy continued ill; he had one of those lingering infantile fevers which occasion so much restlessness and fretfulness, and was always wanting his mamma. His mamma, however, paid but hasty visits to her nursery; her mind seemed too restless and too much absorbed by other things to bear to be long together in one place.

Colonel Lenox had not yet returned home, nor could Emilia learn that he was expected before the Tuesday evening mentioned by Mr. Wilcox. His wife seemed hurt and offended by his absence, and by the circumstance that he had gone away without even telling her whither he was bound, and had not written one single line to her since his departure.

The truth was, that he was miserable himself, and in such a state of mental irritation that his home was become insupportable. He could not—I should rather say he never properly endeavoured to make up his mind to his situation; he could not console himself for his loss. Every fresh day increased his regret as he contrasted the wife he possessed with the being he had lost. He was a prey to every species of self-reproach; he cursed his own infatuated delays; he grieved over the sufferings that he might with one honest word have terminated; but most of all he detested himself for the infatuated precipitation with which he had linked his fate to another—sacrificed the liberty he prized so highly to a short-lived passion, and imposed upon himself a burden of duties equally irksome and repulsive to his nature.

He endured this situation for a short time, but his temper gave way under it. He became more irascible and irritable than ever; he felt as if he almost hated the beautiful and volatile creature whom he was bound to guide and to protect: he wanted patience for the task; every attempt he made to restrain her was made in so violent and irritating a manner that he saw he was doing more harm than good.

At last, according to his usual plan, he fairly threw the yoke off his shoulders; and, panting for liberty, for that opportunity for thought and reflection which was not to be found in the

hurry of town, he one morning hastily ordered his valet to pack up a few things; and, flinging himself into the first mail-coach, was carried, he cared not whither, and found himself at last on the banks of Windermere.

The beauty of the scenery here attracted his attention. It was on the loveliest of June mornings that, opening his eyes after a heavy sleep in the coach, he found himself on the shores of those still and lovely waters.

The woods were sweet with the dew of morning, the spreading water glittering in the rays of the rising sun, the blue smoke of the cottages rising through the mist to the heavens; he stopped the coach, sprang out, and, catching his portmanteau from the guard, sat down upon it, soldier-like, under the shade of a broad, spreading oak, which, growing on a little hillock, commanded the sweet and peaceful scene.

Here he seemed to pause for the first time during the last agitating weeks. He had time for reflection—a breathing-time, as it were—that time so invaluable if well applied—that time which the hurry of a life of the world so little affords the opportunity to enjoy.

The image of Emilia was the first which presented itself—that image which, since the interview in the nursery, waking or sleeping, had never been absent. Again he saw that pure, clear eye of truth and virtue, that calm yet fervent expression, that cool and determined brow; again he heard those accents of loyalty and good faith to her husband, at once his admiration and his despair.

Not that he harboured a criminal thought; but he would have retained her heart when all was lost besides—he would have retained the heart; he could not endure the idea of yielding *that* to another. He had formed to himself a sort of vague plan of Platonic tenderness and sympathy, which was like anything but that simple and righteous friendship which Emilia had supposed could in future subsist between them. He had been deeply offended at what he thought this second proof of her heartlessness and inconstancy, and had resented it with all the warmth and injustice of his character.

But now, as he sat meditating in the quiet calmness of this lovely morning, better and more peaceful thoughts rose to his mind. He reflected with admiration upon that which he had before resented so deeply;—her fidelity, her truth, her purity and dignity of heart, began to assume their true colours before his eyes, and his feelings to take a severer and a better turn. The infection of vice is great, but the infection of virtue is greater still. The influences of her just and generous sentiments began gradually to purify the selfishness of his own; he was beginning to feel it possible to desire her happiness, though he himself was not to form it.

Then he thought of his wife, of the love she once had borne him, of his passionate devotion of the moment, and of his as sudden alienation and indifference. Why could not he love her as he once had done?

And then—unhappy Lisa!—rose up to memory such scenes of capricious exactions, of heat and violence, of contemptuous sarcasm, and insolent neglect of all warning and all advice—the results, it is true, of a hidden and disappointed love, which could not and would not be satisfied with less than it itself bestowed; yet the contemplation was, alas! little favourable to the renewal of that affection which it would have been the happiness of your life to obtain.

Absence softens the harsh outlines of things, absence heightens esteem, adds fresh vivacity to affection, calls up the sweet and gentle passages of the past, and fills the soul with a thousand tender remorses, for the hasty injustice, the distorted representation, the rash condemnation which the impatience of the moment has excited in ourselves.

But how if absence presents none of these things?—how if the memory does *not* reflect the sweet and gentle remonstrance, the silent tear, the kind and generous desire for reconciliation, the ready candour which owns the hasty fault? How if it presents but unrestrained and bitter retorts, contemptuous sarcasms, violent looks, and passionate tears? And ah! unhappy and mistaken Lisa! how few but passages such as these had you inscribed upon your husband's heart!

The reflections of Colonel Lenox do not seem likely to improve either his wife's happiness or his own.

Thus he had whiled away the time from day to day, traversing these beautiful scenes on foot, thinking every evening that the next morning he ought to return home, and every morning yielding to the temptation which kept him where he was.

As for Lisa's actual safety, in justice to him it must be said that he had not the slightest apprehension upon the subject. He knew very well that he possessed her heart; and in this lay his greatest and most inexcusable fault—that, knowing it—even feeling in secret somewhat vain of the hold that he still maintained upon her affections—he had not the candour and the justice to attribute her violence and unreasonableness to their true cause. He did not soften these faults to himself by recollecting that which will soften even the most disagreeable effects of attachment. He did not choose to reflect that they arose from love, ill-regulated it was true, but still most genuine love after all.

He knew she was in the constant habit of daily association with Emilia; he believed, under her influence, that nothing could go wrong. He forgot the many hours in which, alone and unguarded, Mrs. Lenox was mingling with the world; and most of all, he forgot the effect which his capricious and unaccountable absence was certain to produce upon every one.

In Lisa it excited the most deep and passionate resentment. It was the first time since their marriage, in spite of all their disagreements, that such a thing had occurred.

Not one line, not one syllable, to tell her where he was, or why he had left her! The late quarrel might have furnished an occasion for this proceeding; but then they had quarrelled so often, and nothing of the sort had ever occurred before.

Lisa was growing every day more and more dissatisfied with herself, and consequently more and more suspicious of the conduct of others. She began to fancy everything most offensive to a wife in the reasons for this unaccountable absence.

She took her revenge accordingly.

She thought herself justified in accepting from another expressions of tenderness such as she believed were, in some way or other, being offered at a strange shrine by her husband.

It is not my intention to follow the progress of her misguided heart from vanity to coquetry, from suspicion to jealousy, from disappointment to alienation—enough the advance the deceiver was making in her affections was increasing day by day, though in a manner almost imperceptible to herself.

Rash and imprudent, she trusted to her own pride for protection; and, armed with so treacherous a defence, despised the dangers which surrounded her, and the daily and hourly remonstrances of her friend.

CHAPTER LII.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.—LONGFELLOW.

TUESDAY has arrived.

To-morrow is Wednesday; to-morrow is the eventful day which shall decide upon the destiny of them all.

The eve of that day is already dawning.

The morning breaks; the sun rises in his strength, and goes careering through the sky, shedding his beams upon all those different scenes of eventful life which are acting in this great tragi-comedy of human existence.

The first group he visits with his slant and early beam is that of a set of young men who are coming out of a club-house in St. James's Street, and separating, to seek their late and untimely repose, in their different cabs.

They are young gentlemen either of fortune or fashion, who are accustomed to spend at the gaming-table many of the hours of the night, and to make compensation to sleep from the hours of the sweet and wholesome day.

Some of them have been playing very deeply, some of them have lost more than they can pay, and others have won more than they can keep. They all understand that very well, and are as reckless about their gains and losses as they are about everything else. Others have been standers-by, as mere spectators, at the gaming-table, and something much of the same sort at the luxurious supper which has succeeded.

One is there, his cheek ruddy with health and his eye bright with simple meaning. He has been an attentive observer of what has been passing among the gay revellers this evening, because it has interested him more than usual. That other

young man who is now getting into his carriage is obliged to be in a slight degree steadied by his footman's hand as he mounts the steps. He is not in general thus overtaken by wine, but leaves the gayest parties as entirely himself as he entered them; but this night he has suffered himself to be heated, and to be surprised into taking a larger quantity of wine than even his head can bear. And the consequence has been a wager.

The young gentleman had, in fact, rather lost his temper; he had allowed himself to be surprised into saying things which he never intended to say. For once the languid and indifferent Alcibiades had become heated and in earnest; and he had laid a wager of fifty to one that he "*shall* persuade her to brave her husband, and, in defiance of his authority, go to this masquerade."

"Will anybody back him?"

"Not I!"—"not I!" "We all know Lenox too well for that; he's a mighty cool hand. He lets that pretty silly thing he calls his wife trifle and amuse herself as she pleases, but she'll find him rather a rough customer if she trespasses too far. For my part, I don't see the great triumph of persuading her to go there, even if you *could*, when all the world are going too—only that I heard he has sworn his great oath, that no wife of his shall ever wear a mask; and he's one who, when he has got a whim of this sort into his head, usually holds to it."

The young nobleman who had laid the wager said no more. And this was almost all that passed.

Now Johnny Wilcox was, as you will have begun by this time to perceive, a very shrewd, observing, intelligent young fellow; and he thought he understood all this scene very well. And when he got into his cab, he sat musing upon it in his own mind; and as he laid his head upon his pillow, he became more and more uneasy. The result was, that he did not sleep very long, if at all; and that, therefore, the sun, by the time he had reached two degrees short of meridian, glanced upon the bright harness of a perfectly-appointed cab, which was making its way through the dust and obstructions of dark and narrow Chancery Lane.

And now he is ushered into the little sitting-room, where he is for a short time alone, and amuses himself with looking at the backs of the half-dozen books, and twisting the little china shepherdess about upon the chimney-piece: then the door opens, and the sweet Emilia enters, looking so bright, so pleased, and so happy!

It is the Emilia of the Oaks again!

She smiles with her usual cordiality—stretches out her hand—and then they are seated; and, after a few preparatory sentences, she looks into his face, and says anxiously, "Something, I am sure, is amiss with you, Mr. Wilcox, this morning. Are you come to let me know it?"

"I wish it were my privilege to be allowed to come to you whenever anything goes amiss with me," said he, "and it would not be amiss long; but this is a matter that vexes and teases

me, and which I think you ought to know. And yet, whether there is anything amiss, I declare I can hardly say; but does your beautiful friend, Mrs. Lenox, intend to go to the masquerade to-morrow or not?"

"I believe she intends to go—why do you ask? This is a sort of amusement which I know many people think excessively dull, and so I believe it usually proves, but why should not she go? Colonel Lenox has written to his valet to say that he shall certainly be at home at night, and of course he will go with her."

"I heard last night at C——'s, that Colonel Lenox had declared she should *not* go; and I heard a wager laid that, in defiance of her husband's known opinions upon that subject, she should be induced to go for the sake of another. You know who that other is, I suppose?"

He then entered fully into the subject of his fears and suspicions, concluding with entreating Mrs. Danby, as she valued her friend's reputation and security, to persuade her to abandon the idea.

Her going would be attributed by all the world to influences which had become so notorious, that she ought to take the very first opportunity of openly disavowing them. Her husband's honour and her own were alike in jeopardy.

"I see the full force of what you say," said Emilia, growing red and pale between impatience and anxiety. "She has promised to send the carriage to fetch me this morning. I will not rest till by my entreaties and my representations I have persuaded her. I know she has thought with pleasure of the scheme, but Lisa will always hear reason if one has but a little patience with her."

At this moment the maid entered with one of the tiny notes.

"DEAREST EMILY,—Don't be very angry, and don't be very disappointed. I meant to have had a regular old dowager drive out with you Edgeware Road way to-day; but here is Mrs. Castlerising has just written to me. She has got such delicious schemes for to-morrow evening, and there is not a moment of time to be lost, so I am going out with her shopping over half the town, and shall not be at home till midnight, as I dine with her *en petite comité*. I won't tell you what we are about till we meet to-morrow. If you like to have the carriage to go into the Park, pray tell my man.

"Yours ever,

"Little Tim is better to-day, nurse says."

Emilia was terribly disconcerted at this sudden change of plans.

"How unfortunate!" she cried to Mr. Wilcox, and she gave him the note to read; "but I will write."

She wrote—

"DEAREST LISA,—I am very much disappointed not to be able to speak to you this morning. Can I not see you anywhere in the course of the day, just to speak only three words to you? I think my words would have more efficacy than anything I could write. I beseech you abandon the idea of this masquerade, unless Colonel Lenox arrives to-night, and gives his sanction to it."

The answer did not arrive till nearly five o'clock in the evening.

"Really, Emilia, you grow perfectly ridiculous; I *never* am angry with *you*, but I could find in my heart to be so now. Why, everybody in the world will be at this masquerade. I would not miss it for the universe. Upon my word, you are becoming as fantastical as an old maid."

The third group which the sun visited with his beams this day was a happier one.

Mrs. Danby was about to go up into her room to give some fresh directions about her own little preparations for this eventful breakfast, when she met Susan upon the stairs, with "Oh! pray, madam, don't go up just yet. Stay down just five minutes, Mrs. Danby."

"Why, Susan—why may I not go into my own room, pray?"

"Oh! young Mrs. Danby, wait only three minutes, and I will come and tell you when we're ready."

Susan's face was full of joyous and busy importance. But Emilia, thinking of other things, little heeded it. She went down with her usual good nature into the sitting-room again.

She sat there a short time engaged in her various employments, till at length the little maid opened the door with—"Now, ma'am, if you please."

Emilia went up stairs. It is needless to say that Susan was in waiting for her. The curtains of the bed were fast closed; and Susan, her cheeks quite crimson with excitement, was standing at the foot of it.

"Now, come in, young Mrs. Danby!" she cried; "and do tell me what you are going for to wear to-morrow at this breakfast!"

"Why, to tell you the plain truth, Susan, I have been a little puzzled with that business; but I have contrived what I think will do very well. If you ask Mary, she shall show it to you."

The answer to this was a sudden tearing open of the curtains of the bed by Susan, and a display of the beautiful costume she had prepared, with all its *real* Brussels lace, its ribands, and its elegant ornaments; a bonnet still more beautiful than the one procured before; gloves, parasol—all the details of the most finished toilet arranged in proper order around.

Emilia was speechless with astonishment—Susan with delight.

However, after a moment, her tongue was loosened again, and she began with her usual volubility:—

"Well, do you think it pretty, or do you not? It's all real lace, and real India muslin, and has cost Mr. Danby I won't tell you how much money—but wasn't it a kind and pretty thought in him?—and won't you look nice?"

"Mr. Danby?" faltered Emilia.

"Yes, to be sure. Now you're a-going to go out, he's ordered all these pretty things to be got for you, because he says how you are the handsomest and the best of them all—and now only just try them on, that I may see that they fit; for the young woman as brought them here is a-waiting, and there'll maybe a stitch be wanting here or there; so, bless you, just try it all on."

"But did Mr. Danby? Was he so good as to order all these pretty things for me, Susan? How could it come into his head to think of such things?"

"Oh!" said Susan, "true love has put many an odd matter into a man's head afore now. But, bless you! make haste and put all this panjandery on; for I am quite in a fidget to see how well you will look in it."

Susan's wish was soon gratified, and beautiful she did indeed look in it.

"Now, you look like a bride at last," cried Susan, clasping her hands with triumphant delight, as she walked round and round her. "Ay, ay! now it's all right. I never foreboded good since you came into this house—poor, weany creature as you war!—all in that melancholy black, like! But now you're a bride at last, and this is your real wedding-day, and master and you are going for to be happy, ain't you?" she added, as she looked with rapture upon Emilia's quiet smile and rising colour.

"It fits beautifully, don't it?"

It was a trifle, a mere trifle, it would seem; but, as Emilia felt herself restored to the elegance of former days, and glancing into her glass, beheld reflected the renewed image of the lost Emilia Wyndham, a very soft sigh of regret and of happiness mingled raised the beautiful lace that hung over her bosom.

She was grateful, she was pleased; and yet—

But she shook off that feeling in a moment, and said cheerfully,—

"Now we must take off this exquisitely pretty dress, Susan, and I must put on my other; for I am impatient to go down to tell my father and to thank Mr. Danby. I thought I heard him come in."

"Ay, sure enough, he's come in; and now *do*, dear—just step down as you are, and show it to your father and to master—he'll be so pleased!"

She coloured again a little, and then yielded to persuasion, and stepping lightly down stairs, ushered by the proud and happy Susan, opened the drawing-room door. There was one more than was exactly wanted sitting within—the mother was there as well as the son; but she was placed behind the door, and, as it opened, Emilia did not perceive her; while stepping forward, half ashamed of the display, she went up to her husband and said, "Susan insists upon my coming down in the dress itself, to thank you for your very kind thought and pretty surprise, Mr. Danby."

He looked at her—gazed at her—held her back a little with one hand—covered his eyes—gazed again—said nothing, but sighed.

She looked even dazzlingly beautiful; her colour raised, her eyes beaming with grateful kindness, and adorned by this charming dress, which set off her fine figure and face to the highest advantage.

But he—

In her usual every-day dress, withered and faded with the life she habitually led, he had learned to feel as if the vast difference which separated them had lost much of its extent. Now, as he looked at the bright and radiant being, almost flashing like some heaven-descended angel before his eyes, the bitter sense of his own immeasurable deficiencies in comparison again pre-
 ved upon his heart.

She saw the sudden expression of pain which crossed his brow, and, taking his hand, looked upon him with the gentlest affection. She was beginning to divine and to take interest in this deep and wayward and unhappy passion.

"Are you not pleased, after all, with the effect produced by your charming present?" said she. "If you do not like it, perhaps I shall find it possible to discover a fault in it; but, indeed, I cannot do that easily."

"No; it's a beautiful, beautiful gown, my dear!" cried Mr. Wyndham, who had been surveying her with unmixed delight; "and at last you look like Emilia Wyndham again."

She saw her husband's wounded look.

"No, dear papa, you must not say so. Say I look like Emilia Danby, the grateful wife of a kind and most indulgent man."

"Can you say that from your heart, Emilia?" said her husband, doubtfully.

Her only answer was a smile—but such a smile! He had never seen such a smile upon her face before.

She soon left the room, attended by Susan, without even perceiving Mrs. Danby, who, mute with dismay and astonishment, sat fixed as a statue behind the door.

"Now," said Mr. Wyndham, "that is a beautiful dress. I have not seen Emilia look like herself for years—"

So he went mumbling on, but no one listened to him.

Mr. Danby's heart was full.

He sat back in his chair, musing, in no unpleasant mood, upon the result of Susan's prophecies; upon the grateful and affectionate nature that responded so readily to the first touch of kindness; upon his own harsh and careless temper, which had so negligently thrown away the means of making one so good and innocent, if not altogether happy, so far, and far happier than she had been. He was musing upon other plans for her enjoyment which began to dawn upon his mind. He was savouring all the felicity of being released from the ceaseless meditation upon self to think with disinterested pleasure upon the happiness of another.

Mr. Wyndham, curious as a child, soon followed his daughter to take a fresh survey of the pretty trifles which had pleased him so much. His taste for pretty trifles, which had long languished for want of nourishment, seemed to revive upon this the first occasion for indulging it. No sooner was he gone than Mrs. Danby gave one of her loud "Humphs!"

Mr. Danby started from his pleasant reverie, and looking round, said,—

"You there, mother! I protest I had forgotten you."

"I dare say you had, or you would never have let that dancing Dalilah parade her finery before your mother. You'd have been ashamed to have done it."

"And pray, mother," said her son, with a smile, "what is there to be so much ashamed of?"

"What is there to be ashamed of? why, everything to be ashamed of! What are you about?—suffering your wife to wheedle you first out of one thing and then out of another. I thought you'd been more of a man, Matthew."

"I don't think it's the least unlike a man to be wheedled, as you call it, by a very charming woman; but I assure you there was no wheedling or pretty faces in the business—unless, indeed, poor Susan's face enters into that category, for she is the only wheedler in this case, I assure you."

Mrs. Danby's tongue was now set loose, and she railed unsparingly, first at Susan, then at Emilia, then at her son. Every one was included in the most bitter and unjust animadversions.

The torrent would have flowed, it is impossible to say how long, had not Mr. Danby, seeming all at once to take his resolution, risen from his chair, approached her, and said,—

"My good mother, I have listened to you a very long time, and now I think it is your turn to listen to me. We have had enough, and, in my opinion, a great deal too much, of this kind of conversation; and, once for all, let it end. The course I propose in future to pursue with regard to my wife is one extremely different in every respect from that which we have so foolishly, selfishly, and ungenerously followed until now. That young lady, when she came among us—"

"Hoot, toot!" cried the mother, losing all patience—she could not bear to hear Emilia called "that young lady."

"She is a young lady," reiterated Mr. Danby, "and we ought to have treated her as such, mother," he added, raising his voice with considerable determination, as, beating her foot in an angry tattoo on the floor, she seemed resolved not to hear him, and turned her head obstinately away.

"Mother! listen to me. We have been friends, and the best of friends, from the hour I first had knowledge till this day. I love you, mother, and I honour you."

"Pretty honour!—love!—nonsense!"

"I have let such feelings lead me, perhaps, too far—henceforward, mother," he continued, speaking louder, "if we are to continue friends, you must endeavour to love, and, at all events, you *shall* respect my wife; for she has been and she is like an angel from heaven among us—and she deserves it."

And, saying this, he returned to his arm-chair, crossed his legs, leaned upon his hand, and relapsed into silence.

No more words were needed; had he spoken for hours he could not have made himself better understood. She felt that her rule of wrong, of hatred, and injustice was at an end; that, in future, the love and respect of the husband would shelter the wife from every malign influence. Mr. Danby had entered

into the full force of Susan's representations. He had pondered upon them much and long during the last few days, and the result of his ruminations had been the resolution to adopt a new course, and by what may be esteemed a thing incredible in real life, *he actually followed up his resolution.*

Emilia soon came into the room again, looking pleased and happy, and, sitting down by her husband, endeavoured to amuse him with her conversation; while Mrs. Danby, subdued and silenced, but gloomy and sulky as possible, sat chewing the cud of her discontent in a corner, and scowling on the scene.

CHAPTER LIII.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear.

BYRON.

It was not until after the cloth had been removed, and Mr. Danby had retired to his chambers, that Emilia received the second note from Mrs. Lenox; and while she was pondering, with a distressed countenance, upon its contents, another from Mr. Wilcox, written in a hasty, scrawling manner, was put into her hand:—

"For Heaven's sake, dear Mrs. Danby, do not let Mrs. Lenox go to this masquerade to-morrow! Speak to her husband—try any means. I have not time to explain myself; but half a word is enough for you. She positively *must not go.*"

"Inquire," said Emilia to the servant-maid, showing Mrs. Lenox's note, "inquire from the footman who brought this note whether his master is expected in town to-night."

"The footman says as how Colonel Lenox's valet had a letter from his master to say that he should be in town at eight o'clock this evening," was the answer.

"Then order me a carriage at Spillman's, and tell the man to be here at a quarter to eight. I must go out this evening. Tell Mr. Biggs to come to me.

"Biggs," as he entered the room, "I must go out this evening for half-an-hour, and you must go with me. My dear father, will you take care of yourself till I come back?"

The expression of old Mrs. Danby's face was worth observing while these hurried directions were being given.

There she sat, silent and still, and immoveable as a statue, but drinking in every word.

Emilia, in the innocence of her heart, far from imagining that she was giving grounds for suspicion, did not even conceive the possibility of any suspicion existing; she did not send in to tell Mr. Danby that she was obliged to go out; for, though perhaps it was the first time since her marriage that ever she had left home alone in the evening, she considered herself perfectly at liberty in this, as in every similar respect.

So at eight the carriage came to the door, and, accompanied by Biggs, she drove to Colonel Lenox's house in Grosvenor Street.

But Colonel Lenox had not returned home.

She inquired for Mrs. Lenox; Mrs. Lenox was gone out to dinner.

She would step up into the nursery, she said, and see how the children were getting on.

"Is your master expected to-night?" she asked of the servant as she entered the house.

Colonel Lenox had written to his valet that he should certainly be at home either this evening or the next morning, but had left it uncertain which.

She resolved to wait till a quarter to nine o'clock, and then return in time for Mr. Danby's tea.

She went up into the nursery—the children were both asleep—the little boy somewhat better. Emilia visited their tiny cots, while nurse held the candle.

"He is better," said nurse, while Emilia looked anxiously at the little flushed cheek, and thin feverish hand, which was extended upon the fringed and embroidered counterpane. "He is better; but he frets after his mamma and papa so: the sense of that little creature, madam, is wonderful—I never saw such a child—he does not seem to forget as other children do. This very night, I thought he was busy with his playthings on the floor, and all at once he gets up and runs to stand by my knee, and begins to moan and fret; and when I kissed and soothed him, and asked him what it was for—'I want papa and mamma,' says he. The dear, little, loving creature!"

Emilia sighed, turned away, and looked at the baby. The lovely waxen cherub was asleep in all the innocent tranquillity of its age—too young to feel the heavy injury of neglecting parents. Perhaps this very innocence affected the observer more than even the moanings and lamentations of the elder child.

She bent her head and kissed the little slumberer; and then, hearing the clock go the second quarter, went down to Lisa's boudoir to look for pen and ink, in order to write a note to Colonel Lenox.

Nothing could exceed the disorder in which Mrs. Lenox's books and papers lay upon the beautiful inlaid table; unanswered notes—unsettled bills—English novels with uncut leaves, and little French volumes half open—all tossed and thrown together as if for days the inhabitant of that adorned and beautiful abode had suffered everything to accumulate without heed. The disorder of her mind was pictured in the confusion around her.

With some difficulty Emilia found a sheet of note paper, and as she opened the fair enamelled paper-book, her eye was caught by two drawings; they were prints for costumes; one for Ariel, the other for Belinda, in the "Rape of the Lock." At the foot of the Belinda was written—

"Choose which you like; but I am for Belinda for you. To be sure you would make a sweet Ariel; but if you do not take Belinda, who can? I have

made up my mind to be Thalestris, and nothing shall persuade me into Belinda—so no ceremony, I pray.

L. C.

"A certain *élégant* has taken—what do you think?—Sir Plume!"

Emilia had read these few words, written in pencil upon the lower margin of the drawing, before she well knew what she was doing.

She shut the book.

It was then but too true Lisa had resolved upon going to this masquerade, and in character, and who was this *élégant* who was to personify Sir Plume? It was but too much to be feared who.

And in what company! That of Mrs. Castlerising—a person so notorious in the world of fashion—the last person, as Emilia believed, that Colonel Lenox would wish his wife to be seen with.

It became more and more necessary to put Colonel Lenox upon his guard; yet to allude to the subject in a note—subject to all those casualties to which notes passing through the hands of gentlemen's servants are liable—seemed impossible, except it were done in the very most equivocal terms.

She sat down and wrote—

"Grosvenor Street, half-past eight."

"I came here in hopes to have seen you for a few seconds on your arrival; but I can stay no longer, and must go home. It is most urgent for the sake of your future happiness, and that of one who should be dearer to you than yourself, that I should see you as soon as possible. Can you come to me to-morrow morning? I go with Lisa to this breakfast, but shall not leave home till four. "E. D."

She rang the bell, delivered the note, with orders that it should be given to Colonel Lenox the moment he arrived, and then returned to her carriage and went home.

She found no one in Chancery Lane but her father. Old Mrs. Danby had gone away directly after dinner. Mr. Danby was not yet returned. He did not, in fact, return to tea. Some engagement kept him at his chambers till so late, that all his family, as was sometimes the case, had retired to rest, and he let himself in.

The next morning he was up and away while Emilia was still sleeping; and, at breakfast, the presence of her father prevented her doing that which she had intended to do, give him some idea of the situation of things.

Perhaps she was not sorry that no opportunity occurred. She knew his severe and sarcastic turn of thought, and most particularly revolted from the idea of exposing the faults of her friend before a censor so little indulgent; yet she felt that, engaged and involved as she found herself it would be right to let her husband into the confidence. However, things happening as they did, she had not that morning any opportunity. She comforted herself with thinking, that before night the danger would be over, and Colonel Lenox and his wife have come to that understanding which would preclude the necessity of any further interference on her part; and thus, perhaps, do away with all the necessity for her entering upon the subject with Mr. Danby.

And yet she could not help being uneasy. She felt that there was a disguise—and disguise she detested. She had written to Colonel Lenox—a matter in other circumstances perfectly indifferent, but which, in her peculiar situation, she thought should at least have been mentioned to her husband; but then to mention it, without entering upon a full explanation of all that had passed, seemed to be worse than not to mention it at all.

CHAPTER LIV.

Oft could he sneer at others, as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of Love!—BYRON.

MR. DANBY, who since the happy intervention of Susan had recovered his confidence and his cheerfulness as by a charm, pushed away his papers, and conversed at breakfast with an ease and a gaiety which made him positively agreeable. He was full, also, of little attentions to poor Mr. Wyndham, whom, without any intentional unkindness, he had been too much in the habit of neglecting. The poor man was pleased and happy, and Emilia smiled her satisfaction.

She again alluded to her dress, and was full of its praises.

"I did not think dear Susan had possessed so much taste. One must not judge of people's taste by the way they trim themselves out, I see; for the dear woman seems to have had odd notions upon such subjects, as far as she herself is concerned; but what she has chosen for you, Mr. Danby, I really must tell you—as I know you will be *particularly* interested by such subjects—its elegance and good taste itself."

"I am *particularly* interested upon this subject, my dear Emilia, because I wish you to be particularly pleased yourself. I am happy Susan has hit the matter so well. I had my forebodings upon the matter, certainly; but I own I thought the effect, when you came down yesterday, excessively pretty altogether. And what time are you to set out to-day? for I could find in my heart to be such an old fool as just to step in and look at you again."

"Oh, pray do! I was only half complete yesterday. Do come in and see me in all my glory, decked out to perfection in your present. Do come in before I go, Mr. Danby: I shall be the happier for having displayed myself to you before I go among a set of people, whom, really, I don't care the least to please."

"Does that sentence *really* mean all it appears to imply, Emilia?" said he, looking at her with one of his sharp-questioning expressions of the eye.

"If it implies that your approbation is in all things most valuable to me, that sentence *does* mean all it implies," she answered with an air of simple sincerity which made his heart glow.

Oh, blessed, blessed Susan!

The morning passed away—hour followed hour—still no sign from Colonel Lenox.

Two little notes she had received, but neither of them from him.

The first was from Lisa.

"I came home so late last night!—a miserable preparation for this breakfast. I shall not go early, and I dare say your serene highness will be in no irrational hurry. I will send the carriage for you at four, and we will go down *tête-à-tête*. There will be men enough to be had when we get there. The man, who above all men, ought to be there, is——; but it's no matter. I begin to imitate your philosophy at last, Emilia, and am as hard and insensible as the nether millstone."

The second was from Mr. Wilcox.

"I cannot get to see you this morning: I have business with my lawyer that, will not be delayed. I was in a party last night, where I heard things said which only make me the more and more anxious upon the subject I spoke to you of. I shall take care to be at the entrance into the gardens, and shall wait there till I see you come in. I will join you immediately. In the mean time, *do not suffer* her to go to this odious masquerade."

Three o'clock, and who now so proud and happy as both Susan and Mary, presiding at their sweet mistress's toilet? while Emilia, anxious and troubled as she is, cannot help feeling her heart beat with a sort of foolish pleasure, as, thus restored to herself, she is about once more to enter the world, to which she has so long been a stranger.

She cannot—no, she is neither wise enough, nor indifferent enough, nor worried enough—she cannot help looking with pleasure upon the charming being that her glass reflects.

At last the finishing stroke is put to Susan's handiwork; she strokes down the skirt; she arranges the last pin; she throws the beautiful lilac cloak over the snowy white of the dress; she places the light bonnet over the long, flowing curls, and pronounces her young mistress "done."

Mr. Danby has not yet arrived; but Mrs. Danby, curious as the rest of her sex, in spite of her ill-humour and dissatisfaction at the whole business, cannot deny herself the pleasure of really seeing "How she will look, pranked out in all this new finery." So she is sitting in the little dining-room, when Emilia enters, beauteous as the rose of Sharow, and after saluting her, goes up to and kisses her father.

Biggs enters with a note.

It is hastily opened, perused with a look of vexation and annoyance, a shake of the head, and a half angry, half impatient little stamp with her foot upon the floor; then it is torn in four pieces and flung within the fender. Again she hastily stoops down, ungloves her hand, collects the pieces, opens a table-drawer, thrusts them in, locks it and takes out the key, and, turning to Biggs with "No answer," continues her attentions to her father.

The old lady's mouth was now pursed up into the smallest possible dimensions; while her sharp black eyes were observing everything that passed.

Mr. Danby at length came in. He had left his chambers at

this unusual hour. He called himself, and he felt himself, to be an old fool for it; yet he could not deny himself the delight of seeing his charming treasure a second time dressed out and adorned with his gifts.

He hoped for one more glance of those happy and affectionate eyes, which were to him more bright than the day-spring. His heaven was there—he could imagine no greater. To see her happy, and through him—to feel that he was not altogether indifferent to this beloved and beauteous creature—to creep in, gaze at her, and not feel hated, was as the joy of paradise to him.

He stole in so gently that she did not hear him enter the room, for she was stooping down and talking to her father. Mr. Wyndham was praising and admiring her dress with renewed pleasure, and in his childish way examining and remarking upon every part of it—so proud and so happy to recover the daughter of earlier and better days, that he was almost crying for joy.

She was busy lending herself to his feebleness and his enjoyment, and felt additionally pleased and additionally grateful to see him so content.

Mr. Danby stole to her side with—

“Now it is my turn to admire you, Emilia.”

She turned round a little startled, and gave him such a sudden, bright, and speaking look.

One look alone before had ever told so much; and ah! how different had the expression been from this!

“Well, my love,” he said—it was the first time in the course of their long connexion that he had ever once ventured to use that word—“you *are* really beautiful.”

She laughed at the compliment.

“You must not be so proud of your own handiwork indeed, Mr. Danby.”

“And what do you call this? and what is this stuff?” He went on examining the various parts of her dress with the curious eye of a scientific philosopher engaged in the examination of some rare and beautiful production of nature.

“Oh, this is called silk, and this is called lace—real Brussels! as that extravagant Susan proudly called it; and this is from the looms of India;—one must use great words upon so great an occasion.”

And so she prattled to him; for her heart was full of his kindness; and kindness was never lost upon the cheerful spirit of Emilia.

And now the clock struck four, and a carriage was heard coming up the street.

“Mrs. Lenox’s carriage,” said the maid.

“What time are we to expect you back, Emilia?”

“Why, really, I am so ignorant at what time these things usually end, that I cannot exactly promise when—I shall, I hope, be back by nine o’clock. I mean to honour you and my father with my company at tea, arrayed in all my splendour.”

“Do so, if you possibly can. And yet, don’t—don’t think of

us—don't come home sooner than you quite like on our account, my dear."

These were his last words as he handed her into the carriage, and returned up stairs a happier and prouder man than he had ever been in his life.

His mother might pinch her lips, look significant, and shake her head—he cared not: he said a few good-natured things to her; but, seeing that she was resolutely and obstinately out of humour, he, after asking her to stay to dinner, to which she consented, prowled about the room, found an old Edinburgh Review, and, burying himself in the arm-chair, his peculiar property, fell back, crossed his knees, and began to pore upon it with one eye, in all the delight of his former bachelor ease and negligence—his pleasant feelings considerably enhanced by the charming recollection of the sweet vision which had just passed before his eyes; and his honest and affectionate heart revelling in a variety of delightful feelings that no cold, selfish bachelor, I can tell him, will ever know. He really could not find it in his heart to go to his chambers again that day; so he sat reading his old Edinburgh till dinner-time.

Mr. Danby happened to have nothing very important that day on hand; so even after dinner, and quite contrary to his usual custom, he for once indulged himself with staying at home.

His mother had relaxed a good deal in her temper, under the influence of a dinner with her son—a considerably better dinner, too, than any she allowed herself at home. She was sitting, moreover, in that seat which she could never see occupied by her daughter-in-law without feelings of bitter envy—the head of her son's table. He had made her drink a glass of wine to his wife's health; for it happened to be her birthday, and she had performed the ceremony less ungraciously than might have been expected. She grew, at last, quite chatty and agreeable; for she could be very agreeable when she chose—at least, in her son's opinion—and she talked of old times and old things; while Mr. Wyndham, full and content with the good things of this life, which to-day had fallen largely to his share, dozed and snored in his chair.

Mr. Danby sat breaking his biscuits, sipping his wine, and answering by a few idle monosyllables to his mother; every now and then pulling out his huge, old-fashioned gold watch, and looking at the hour.

He was a little like the man with the saddle—he thought it was time she should have come back before it was possible for her to have arrived.

"Was not that nine o'clock," at last he said, "that struck? Don't you think it is time to be talking of tea?"

"It's only eight—I counted it. Look at your watch," said the old lady. "I never knew that watch go wrong. It was your father's watch, made by that old Rigby in Fleet Street. The first little money your poor father had to spare, he bought me that clock which stands in my lobby to this day. I never

heeded a watch much, but I *did* long for a handsome eight-day clock, I own. The next he laid out in buying himself that watch. He said, when he did buy a costly thing, he liked it to be a *good* thing. It has a plain outside, but it never goes wrong. It was like your father, Matthew. What on earth can have made it go wrong now?"

Mr. Danby smiled as he thought of the foolish force of that passion (so unlike the well-regulated affections of his father), which had made time stand still.

He showed the dial-plate to his mother, only saying,—

"It is not the watch that is in fault this time, you see."

"La! to think of your making such a blunder! Eight o'clock—to be sure. I never did know that watch go wrong."

After another long, weary half-hour, Mr. Danby looked at his watch again, and then he began to think the hour would never come to an end; and it just came into his head that the old Edinburgh might help him through it, as a change from his mother's conversation; so he said—

"Suppose we go up stairs, though it wants yet half an hour of tea; for the time seems long, owing to my not being at my chambers as usual, I suppose."

"Won't you have tea?"

"No, no—not till a little after nine. We will give her a quarter of an hour's law."

At last the clock struck again—*nine*.

"It was unreasonable to suppose that she could return to tea," he thought to himself; and after waiting with his watch in his hand, and his eyes fixed upon the minute finger, till the quarter of the hour was over, he turned round, pulled the bell, ordered tea, and resumed his Edinburgh.

I am afraid all the wisdom of that renowned Review was quite lost upon him.

The words passed mechanically through his brain; but not one of them reached that strange, mystical place where the perception is supposed to reside. I mean what you call—because you know nothing about it—the sensorium.

He read every word, and he did not perceive the sense of one. You have all of you, I dare say, often done the same.

Every time a carriage rattled up the narrow street, he started and listened, though he did not raise his eyes from the page.

But all the carriages passed by.

Tea came.

The cheerful, hissing, bubbling urn was placed upon the table, and his mother proceeded with all due formality to rinse and wipe the cups with the napkin laid across her knee, according to the old fashion of her old days; and then she put the *exact* quantity of tea necessary for three people into the teapot. "For, if my daughter-in-law choose to be so late," thought she, "I do not see why the dregs of the teapot may not be good enough for her." Mr. Wyndham rolls his ample arm-chair upon its easily revolving castors to the table, and falls upon his favourite crumpets and muffins.

Mr. Danby never once raises his head from his Edinburgh Review.

His mother handed to him the plate of crumpets; but he put it away—he wanted another hand to present it. Even his favourite tea—his beloved cup of tea—stood chilling and untasted upon the little table beside him.

Half-past—another quarter—and the maid comes in to ask, “Shall she take away the things?”

“No,” said her master, lifting up his head; “Mrs. Danby will want tea when she comes in.”

Ten o'clock.

And Biggs enters to carry away his master to bed.

“Do you know in what part of Wimbledon Mr. Gibson’s house is?” asks Mr. Danby. “How far should you call it from town?”

“I believe I know the place, sir—out beyond Wimbledon Park—seven miles, at least, from Hyde Park Corner, I have always heard it reckoned.”

Mr. Danby’s brow looked somewhat smother. He tossed off his cup of tea, resumed his book, and actually *read* five or six pages, and understood them.

At last he lifted up his head, and said,—

“Don’t stay longer on my account, mother. It is past your usual hour of going to bed. Pray don’t think of me, but go home.”

“No,” said his mother, looking for once in her life really grieved, as well as annoyed and vexed. “Let me stay with you a little longer, Matthew.”

“My heart misgives me lest some accident should have happened,” she was going to add; but, for once in her life, she fell so really anxious that she was afraid to alarm him.

She held her tongue, and took her knitting.

Eleven o’clock—twelve.

Then Mr. Danby pushed back his chair, threw down his book, rose, paced the room, first looked out of one window, then out of the other.

A pitch dark night, and the rain pattering in the street.

The lamps, dwindled to imperceptible points through the haze of the rain—gas was not then—were shedding a faint light upon the pavement, along which nothing was now passing. Door shut after door, as a stray foot-passenger might be heard returning along the dripping flagstones.

At last all that is over; everything hushed, and a deep sleep, as of death, has fallen upon the vast and busy life of the huge city.

The deep bell of St. Paul’s tolls *One*.

And now Mrs. Danby and her son began to look pale, and to shudder, and to exchange strange looks of meaning with each other.

The mother had, after all, a mother’s heart, and she was trembling for her son, as she saw the almost ghastly look of alarm with which he turned from the window and resumed his place in his arm-chair, sitting bolt upright in it—only listening.

Two.

There is a sound of footsteps rapidly approaching up the street; a clattering of pattens, as of one in haste; and then a knock at the door.

Both mother and son started from their chairs; and Mr. Danby scuffling along with more than his usual trepidation and awkwardness, hurries down stairs; and after bungling at the lock for several minutes, finally undoes the door.

But it is only Susan.

She looks bewildered with the light, and her cloak is dripping with wet.

He dares hardly speak—he hardly can articulate,—

“What news, Susan?”

“Bless my heart! What news? Why do you ask me? It’s for me to ask what news? What can keep missis out so late? I’ve been sitting up for her till my patience is run out. Never knew her to do such a thing before in all my life. I thought she’d come in every minute; but at last I was forced for to come and see. What is the matter, Matthew Danby?”

“Come up stairs, Susan. You will find your mistress in the sitting-room.”

And, mastering with a strong effort his excessive disappointment, he followed Susan slowly up stairs.

Susan was in the sitting-room in a moment, and had already looked round with—

“My stars! what keeps you here, madam, when young Mrs. Danby has been in bed these three hours, I suppose.”

“She is not come back, Susan.”

“Not come back!” Susan was exclaiming as Mr. Danby entered the room. “Not come back! Why, something must have happened—they’ve had carriages overturned. Some o’ them rickety things with their prancing horses, I’ll be bound—and who knows but the poor thing’s hurt, and a’most kilt! Have you been sending to see after her?”

“No,” said Mrs. Danby, shaking her head; “it’s no carriage overturned, I’m thinking, Susan.”

“Why, what are you thinking, madam—that maybe she’s staid away without leave, for to go to this grand masquerade they’re all a-talking of? Never tell me! That’s not a sort of a place our missis will ever be a-putting her head in—and without her husband’s leave and countenance, forsooth! Don’t, Matthew Danby—don’t nourish suspicions, as I see by your look you do. Don’t think badly of the sweetest young lady and the best wife ever man had. And don’t, madam—I pray you don’t—put such thoughts into young master’s head. I’ll lay my life, she’s where she ought to be; but I’m sadly afraid there’s been some accident.

“It does not signify,” cried Susan, springing up from the chair behind the door, where she had seated herself, and been watching, like the rest, in silent expectation for some time, “I *must* go to Grosvenor Street, and hear what’s become of them all.

"They'll *not* be gone to bed," she added, in answer to a remonstrance from her mistress; "never tell me—they'll *not* be gone to bed—that porter sits there, in that large black London wagon of a thing of his, day and night; and he sleeps no more than if he was a watch-dog, which he looks like enough. He's *always* awake—and at all hours there's coming and going in them houses—and I'll call Biggs up, and we'll go together, and I'll bring you news of some sort or other, Matthew Danby."

"I'll go myself," said Mr. Danby.

"You won't do no such thing, begging your pardon, sir; for the night's like the deluge, and the streets are all of a swim—and you're all of a tremble now, like a leaf—and how shall I get you along the slippery flag-stones? No, no, missis, don't let him. Let Biggs and me go. We'll get along fast enough, and be back again in a twinkling."

It took yet another half hour to awaken Biggs, and for Biggs to dress himself. It was half-past three before Susan could set out.

It was near five before she returned.

She was alone.

She came straight up stairs, looking pale, scared, and bewildered.

"Has there been an accident?" was Mr. Danby's hurried exclamation.

"No, sir."

"Sit down and tell us," said Mrs. Danby, with a sort of forced composure, seeing that her son could not speak.

"You needn't have gone for to be afeard that I should find 'em all asleep in Grosvenor Street," she began roughly; "for there's not a servant among 'em, I verily believe, a-bed—and there's neither master nor missis, nor any on 'em come home, though it went half-past four o'clock afore I left the door."

"Well, but," said Mr. Danby, endeavouring to recall his spirits and recollect himself; "that, I believe, is no such very unusual thing. They keep extremely late hours in fashionable houses, I understand."

"It's late, five o'clock in the morning is, for the most fashionable of them, I expect; but that's not it. There's something more than common a-going on—the very nurses in the nursery haven't been a-bed. Will you hear what I have to tell or not?"

"For God's sake let us hear!"

"Well, then, I went and knocked and rang as usual, and the old porter opened, and I asked, 'Who's at home?' 'Nobody,' says he. 'Ay,' says I, 'in your lying fashion of 'Not at home,' I know very well; but my missis was out with your missis, and she's not come back to *her* house; and we are all uneasy, like, for fear of an accident with some o' them carriages; so, pray, tell the truth, friend—(I knows the porter, and he knows me)—who's at home?—and *how* did they come home, and where's my own missis?"

"There's none of 'em come home—not one," says he, "without any of them lies, as you call them!—that is to say, they've all

been at home—your missis, and all ; and they've all gone out again. Some one way, some another. Some by ones, and some by twos ; but it's not for a porter to have ears, or eyes, or any natural senses ; and if it wasn't that you're a friend of Charlotte's there, in the nursery, I would not tell you so much as that. But your missis is safe enough from carriage accidents ; be you sure of that—and so go your ways, and let me go on with my nap.' And so he turned round, and, sure as you're alive, was snoring away, as usual, in five seconds like."

"And is this all you learned?" began Mrs. Danby.

"No, ma'am, it isn't ; I went right up into the nursery, for I wanted to hear more. I thought to have found them all a-bed—but I thought I'd try, for my heart misgave me like, from the porter's manner, that all was not as it ought for to be. And so I opened the nursery-door softly, to avoid waking the children ; but there was nurse up, and sitting by the fire, and the child asleep upon her knee. Nurse looked as if she had been crying.

"Oh ! is it you, Susan?" she said, turning round ; 'only you ! How come you here, at this time of night?'

"A-seeking of my missis,' says I, 'who's never come home!'

"We'd a little more talk—but I won't bother you with it—indeed, I won't, Master Matthew—for I can see how you look ; your poor heart's all a-going noways ; but I'll tell you all I learned without plaguing you with more of my nonsense.

"They didn't any of 'em come home from that confounded breakfast till very late. It was dark.

"First comes Mrs. Lenox, all by herself in some other carriage than her own ; and she goes into her boudoir, and tears off her bonnet without untying the strings ; and slips off her cloak, and her bracelets, as if she was suffocating—and then up into her nursery—and her children are both asleep.

"She comes right into the middle of the room, looking all as one more dead than alive. And she stood with her face blue—almost black, nurse said—bold upright in the middle of the nursery, looking round all scared, as it were ; and then she dashes to the children's beds ; and begins for to kneel down, and to kiss their poor little hands, like one distracted ; but all without shedding one single tear—and the little ones were soon awaked, and began to scream and to cry ; and she snatches up baby, and clasps it to her heart, and runs round and round the nursery with it, like one out of her mind ; and then Master Timmy, as they call him, cries for mamma, and she flings herself on the bed and half smothers him with kisses ; and then there is a loud thundering knock at the door ; and she gathers up her hair, which had all tumbled about her shoulders, and starts away, like one at the judgment-call, and on with her bonnet and shawl again, and down stairs, and into the carriage, and she is gone !"

The mother and son, fixed and almost as icy as statues, listened to the appalling tale.

Susan went on,—

"The next who comes in is Colonel Lenox—the master him-

self; and he, he's a great stalwart, handsome man. Did you ever see him, sir? Such a noble figure of a man! Such a *royal*-looking man, as one may say; and he comes in. And nurse heard his voice very loud down stairs; he was a-asking for Mrs. Lenox, and whose carriage she was a-gone in. It's the worst of Colonel Lenox, he goes into terrible passions at times. And there he was, a-swearing and a-banging about, and at last, up he comes, tearing into the nursery; and he asks, 'Has Mrs. Lenox been here to-night?' And nurse tells him as how she's been a-going on—a-kissing the children like a poor mad thing. And then he gives a kind of a cry, and he catches up the poor things, and kisses them each of them, once—but *such* a kiss! nurse said—and down he goes again, and bang out of the house.

"The last as comes in is our sweet missis, and she must go up into the nursery too; so nurse had it all, you see. Then she comes up, hurried and trembling with haste and want of breath, and looking just like a glancing, innocent angel, says nurse, after all their passionate ways, and she asks, too, has Mrs. Lenox been home? And when nurse tells her of how she'd been a-going on, our dear young lady falls into a sort of despair, too, like, and falls a-kissing and weeping over the children, her tears streaming like rain over her beautiful cheeks, and all kneeling on the ground in her beautiful dress; and up comes the housemaid all in a hurry, with a little note, and a great black sort of a cloak, and a black mask—they call them cloak dominys, they tell me—and she reads the note, and tears it into a million pieces, and puts it on the fire; and then, her beautiful white hands all in a tremble, so that she can hardly put on her dominy, or fix her nasty black mask—down stairs with her. And there's a carriage at the door—and there's a man in it, another black dominy, and a black mask too; and he *was* a man for Philip saw his boot; and the valet said it was his master's boot; and he steps out of the carriage, and puts her in, and jumps in after her. She was a-crying under her mask, the servants said. And that's all," said Susan, sitting down, panting for breath, and looking like one almost distracted herself.

Mr. Danby had by this time become almost literally transfixed in his chair; his cheek grew deadly pale—his eyes stared, his jaw fell—he seemed to be dying.

"Master, master!"—"Son, son!" cried both the women at once, running up to him.

"Don't take on so, master!—perhaps they're only all gone to the nasty maskerade, after all. Biggs is gone to the maskerade house to inquire, and he'll call the last thing at Grosvenor Street, and see whether they be any of them come back. I saw powers of carriages, with masks in 'em a-driving home as I went; but they were almost all gone, and the streets cleared, as I came back. Master, master, have patience! All will come right—all *will* come right!" Susan kept reiterating; but it was plain her own faith was fast giving way.

The cries of the women recalled Mr. Danby to himself.

"I hear Biggs coming home," he said; "fetch him up."

"You went to the Argyle Rooms, Biggs," said Mr. Danby, with forced composure, as he entered the room; "is the masquerade over?"

"The doors were shut, and all the company gone."

"You returned home by Grosvenor Street?"

"I did, sir."

"Were any of the party come in?"

"Not one of them, sir."

"That will do—go to your master's room again; that will do, good Susan. Don't trouble yourself about me—that will do, mother!"

But his mother had left the room. She returned in about a quarter of an hour. She had four pieces of torn paper in her hand. She placed them before her son. He took them, and, with wonderful composure, read—

"You were—you ever have been—you ever will be—the tutelary angel of my destiny! I will meet you at the place you appoint; and owe my happiness—all the happiness that is left on earth for me—to you."

"E. L."

"I know the hand, mother, perfectly," said Mr. Danby, tearing the paper into the minutest atoms with a coolness and perseverance that surprised her.

"And now," said he, once more taking out his watch, "it is past six o'clock, Susan. My poor mother looks pale and ill; she is not accustomed to this watching. Take her and put her to bed carefully. Nay, dear, good Susan, you need not make yourself unhappy about me. We have done very well without this woman—we will do without her again; *but be sure you are kind to her father!*"

Poor Mrs. Danby, in spite of her tough spirit, was now thoroughly knocked up and subdued. She, like many other people, could anticipate with almost a feeling of complacency at a distance, a catastrophe which completely overwhelmed her when it actually occurred.

The bitterness of her son's distress she read in the very calmness of his manner and countenance. It was the very first time in her life that she had stood in the awful presence of misery. She felt quite sick, faint, and ill; and, though unwilling to leave him, suffered herself, at last, to yield to the solicitations of Susan, and to be led home to bed.

It was now broad daylight—Emilia did not appear—and they had all three lost every expectation of ever seeing her more.

So they separated in a weary, melancholy manner.

The two women, accompanied by Biggs, who had not again gone to bed, and whom Susan entreated to help her with her old mistress, set forward for Charlotte Street.

But, when they were all gone, Mr. Danby took his hat, and walked out to the chemist's.

CHAPTER I.V.

Oh, call me not to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart.—SHAKESPEARE.

EMILIA, looking, as I have vainly attempted to describe her, beautiful, charming, interesting—and the more interesting that her sweet countenance had a somewhat troubled and clouded expression—had set forward in Mrs. Lenox's carriage, and soon arrived in Grosvenor Street.

The footmen knocked, opened the carriage door, and with the announcement, "Mrs. Lenox is coming down," stood on each side, waiting for her: it was vain, therefore, to ask to descend and speak to Colonel Lenox here,—she must wait, perforce, for the meeting in the garden.

His note had dissatisfied and vexed her; there was something in the tone of it distressing to her feelings; it might and it might not mean to imply that he had at last submitted to the terms of simple friendship which she was so resolutely determined to enforce; it had annoyed her, and had added to the cloud upon her countenance.

Mrs. Lenox did not keep her long waiting; dressed in the most beautiful and airy manner, she came carelessly fluttering down, and, entering the carriage, placed herself by the side of her friend. The carriage was open, the day bright, blue, and shining, with white flying clouds careering overhead. The air was most sweet and refreshing, as the light carriage darted forward, and made its way towards Wimbledon: Emilia looked at Lisa, and Lisa looked at Emilia.

It was Lisa who spoke first.

"Upon my word, Emily, you seem equipped for conquest this morning. Why, what a lovely dress you have got on! That dress was never hatched in Chancery Lane, I'll be bound. Which of the fairies brought it to you from the tasteful regions of the West? Wherever you got it, you look uncommonly well in it, Emilia."

There was the least possible tinge of ill-humour, of anxiety, of envy, as she spoke.

"It is a present from Mr. Danby," said Emilia; "but do not let us talk of my muslins; I have something of more importance to speak to you about, Lisa."

Lisa's colour rose.

"I hope you are not going to bother me again with your ridiculous, prudish notions about masquerades. Why on earth, pray, am I not to go—where every one else in the town is going? It is too absurd! Pray, Emilia, don't say one word more upon that subject; for, I tell you beforehand, they will be all thrown away."

"There *would* be no reason upon earth why you should not go, Lisa, if Colonel Lenox had no objection to your going; but as his opinions upon this subject are, unfortunately, pretty well

known, and as—forgive me, Lisa—you are suspected of being somewhat too much under other influences, and—”

“Don’t talk to me in this way, Emilia; you take too much upon yourself; I won’t bear it.”

Emilia was silenced for a moment; then she attempted the subject again.

“Let me only tell you what passed the other night at C——’s Club; let me make you aware of the truth of the facts, at least, Lisa; of course, afterwards, you must do as you please.”

“I don’t want to hear disagreeable facts; I hate these tell-tale sort of things. What is it to me what young men say at their clubs?”

And she turned herself away, and looked doggedly out of the other side of the carriage, as if resolved not to listen to a word more.

But Emilia persevered, and related, as briefly as she could, all that she had learned. She could not feel sure whether Lisa even heard one syllable that she said. She kept her face obstinately turned away, and appeared occupied in watching every object that they chanced to pass.

At length her carriage drove through the gate into Mr. Gibson’s beautiful and extensive pleasure-grounds; she then threw herself back, and played negligently with the tassels of her cordelier, every now and then looking up to answer the salutes of her different friends as they passed by, but not taking the slightest notice of Emilia.

A group of gentlemen stood about the door, and under the magnificent Grecian portico, as the carriage drove up; and Emilia distinguished, with a beating heart, the tall figure of Colonel Lenox, pre-eminent among the rest. Mr. Wilcox was also there, but not that one person whom she most of all dreaded to see.

Followed by the two gentlemen, Lisa and her friend, having crossed a lofty and splendidly ornamented hall, literally tapestried with flowers and plants, entered the drawing-room, whose windows, down to the ground, were wide open and showed the bright beaming sun glittering upon the lake beyond, under the arched hangings of crimson and white muslin that softened the beautiful light. Here they were introduced to the mistress of the house, and, having paid their devoirs, and exchanged the half-dozen sentences *de rigueur* upon such occasions, the party strolled through the open window to the velvet, grassy lawns and enchanted gardens beyond.

The gardens were but a repetition of the well-known but most beautiful English scene—of pendent groves, of magnificent trees, whose branches kissed the green turf at their feet; of flowers of every form and hue, disposed in the most artistical variety; of basins and canals of transparent water; of fountains sparkling gaily in the sun. They were filled with gay groups of visitors, their dresses displaying all the bright hues of the rainbow; while the various military bands, sounding and clanging through the air, gave life and animation to the scene.

Surely, of all forms of festivity—so that the sun *will* but shine—a breakfast of this description is the most festive.

Little, however, were the minds of any of *my* party attuned to such festivity. Emilia, separated by the crowd from the two gentlemen, passed out alone, silent and unregarded, for she knew no one; while Lisa was soon surrounded by a crowd of admiring acquaintance, and was out of her sight before she was aware. Which way Mrs. Lenox took escaped her notice in the hurry and confusion of the moment, natural to one so little accustomed of late to this kind of scenes.

She walked slowly up and down the beautiful terrace in front of the house, smiling in a somewhat melancholy manner at her own exceeding simplicity, which could have led her so earnestly to desire, for Lisa's sake, to be present at this breakfast, when it was plain her presence or absence would be equally unimportant and equally ineffectual to influence her friend's conduct in the least degree. She was musing painfully upon all these things as she paced the grass alone, but not long was she suffered so to remain; she heard a quick step approaching her—turned—it was Colonel Lenox.

She was at the further end of the long terrace when he came up to her, where it was terminated by a winding shady walk, which led to another part of the flower-gardens.

"You wanted to speak to me, Mrs. Danby," said he, addressing her in a grave, ceremonious manner, and pointing to the walk before them.

Emilia coloured, hesitated; a feeling of doubt, of distrust, came over her: he looked, it is true, ceremonious and cold, and yet there was a repressed agitation and impatience under this assumed manner, which she—she who knew him so perfectly—understood but too well.

She looked so exceedingly lovely at that moment—so like the Emilia Wyndham of former and happier times—that he found it impossible to preserve the coldness of manner he had at first affected.

"Say what you have to say, Emilia," he said, in a low voice, and a rapid, agitated manner; "it concerns Mrs. Lenox, I suppose: let me hear it, and let me be gone."

"Do you know her plans for the evening?"

"No, surely; I never trouble my head about her plans."

"Ah! Colonel Lenox," she exclaimed, shaking her head sadly, "this fatal, fatal indifference! Is it right?—is it well? But forgive me: three words of warning will be sufficient—you must not let her go to the masquerade to-night, unless in your own company."

"The masquerade!" said he, vehemently; "what are you talking of! She cannot be so absurd as to imagine me inconsistent enough either to go myself, or suffer her to appear there!"

Emilia shook her head.

"She knows my opinion of these ridiculous, vulgar things; she knows them to be the very last places in the world at which I choose *my* wife to appear. I interfere little enough in her

pleasures; but she knows what I think upon that one subject; I should suppose she would not *dare* to disregard it."

"Perhaps she trusts to your indulgence—shall I venture to call it your carelessness, Colonel Lenox?—and supposes that in this, as in other things, she is just left to do as she pleases. Forgive me, but—I think you cannot be surprised that she should."

"Every one knows my opinion upon this head!" cried he, impetuously; "every one in the world, and she best of all. We had a desperate quarrel upon the subject once before; but I stood my ground, carried my point, and forced her to send a refusal. Who can have had the malice or the impertinence to persuade her into this folly?"

"Mrs. Castlerising has been arranging a party in character, I believe: you cannot wonder that she was anxious to have your beautiful Lisa to make one of it."

"Mrs. Castlerising! Is it possible? Lisa going with *them*, of all people in the world!"

"And why not with them?"

"You know nothing about it," he cried, with his old abruptness. "Why not with them? They are the very last people on earth that she ought to be seen with. Good Heavens! what a fool she is!"

Emilia was silent. She felt—as those who have the generosity, or the imprudence, as the case may be, to interfere in the affairs of others are fated to feel—the most painful doubt and anxiety as to whether she should actually do good or harm by a measure so excessively difficult and embarrassing as the one she had adopted. Had she said enough? Had she said too much? Might she not merely irritate Colonel Lenox against his wife, and fail in persuading him to the only course which could be of service?

At last, after a pause of some continuance, during which he walked by her side with that impatient, irritated countenance which she remembered of old, she ventured again to break silence, and to say,—

"Lisa has, I see, set her heart upon this masquerade, where, she assures me, all of her acquaintance are going. Why should you not go with her? why not indulge her in a wish that seems so natural? Only give her your countenance and protection, and all will be well."

"I go with her! I make a mountebank of myself for the sake of indulging this wild, this insatiable love of pleasure, which keeps her in one restless state of irritating excitement, to the neglect of every duty she has upon earth!"

"Ah, Colonel Lenox, do not say so! you mistake the character of Lisa,—indeed you do! This insatiable craving for excitement and pleasure is not her real nature. Had she—"

"Had she been like you!" he cried; but, checking himself,—
"don't turn away, Emilia, I am not going to offend you. To see you thus—thus, as at the last moment we parted!—yourself again, the Emilia Wyndham of the Oaks, drives me almost beside myself! Forgive me; but, when I contrast her Good Heavens, grant me patience, for I am a miserable man!"

"Oh, Colonel Lenox!" she exclaimed, her cheek growing first red, then very pale, as she turned hurt and displeased away, "why will you talk in this manner? Why will you make me repent that I have ventured to speak to you—that I have been so very, very foolish as to interfere in your affairs! I see it is all useless. How can you—why will you—persist in these wretched comparisons, which wrong your Lisa as much as they do myself?"

"They do indeed do her a grievous wrong!" said he, with a deep sigh.

Emilia was now quite at a stand. She felt that a conversation such as this ought at all events to be put an end to; and yet the very purpose of the conversation seemed worse than defeated. But to stay and listen to language such as this was utterly impossible.

She prepared, therefore, to leave him, saying,—*"I am sorry to be again disappointed, but I see the less we meet the better. You will not try to be reasonable, and I have taken my resolution; but do not forget what I came here to say,—make use of it at your best discretion, but do not neglect my warning."*

And she quitted him and returned to the terrace, where she was soon joined by Mr. Wilcox. She found also among the crowd one or two ladies of her acquaintance in former times, and so managed to pass away the most anxious and disagreeable morning of her life, without the additional awkwardness and disagreeableness of walking totally and absolutely alone, amid joyous and social crowds.

In every group that she passed—on every bench—in every bower—she looked anxiously for Mrs. Lenox, in vain; Mrs. Lenox was nowhere to be seen.

The evening was now advancing, and the company were beginning to leave the gardens and return to town, to prepare for the ensuing masquerade.

Emilia, impatient to quit a scene which had proved to her so peculiarly unpleasant, now entreated her faithful squire, Mr. Wilcox, to search the gardens, find out Mrs. Lenox, and inquire when she intended to return home.

Mr. Wilcox was absent nearly an hour, during which Emilia sat alone upon one of the benches, endeavouring to occupy herself by listening to the beautiful Italian airs which the band seemed to be gratifying their own taste by playing most charmingly, in place of the loud-sounding waltzes with which they had indulged the company.

At last she saw him issuing from the dark and arched walk of lime trees where her own interview with Colonel Lenox had taken place: he walked slowly, and looked extremely grave; he had a small piece of paper in his hand; a line or two was scrawled in pencil upon it.

"Have you found her at last?"

"Yes," said he, looking uneasy; "but she has left the gardens."

"Left the gardens! Good Heavens! what am I to do?"

"She gave me this hasty pencilled scrawl for you," said he, giving her the morsel of twisted paper.

There were but half a dozen words.

"I leave the carriage for you. Do what you like with it."

"Whom did she go with? Do you know?" cried Emilia.

"She went away with Mrs. Castlerising's party," said he. "From what I could gather, they all intend to dine together, and to go to this masquerade in company."

"Then she *does* go?"

"Yes," said he, shaking his head.

"Has she seen Colonel Lenox?"

"I am very much afraid she has. I do not understand it quite, Mrs. Danby; but I am afraid Colonel Lenox has done anything but adopt the means best calculated to bring such a young creature as Mrs. Lenox to reason. I met him just about to leave the gardens, with so inflamed a countenance, that I fear some desperate scene has been passing between them. Good Heavens! does it not seem like the wildest insanity to provoke her to desperation at such a moment? And if you had seen her face as she gave me that hasty scrawl, and, turning from me, was led to Mrs. Castlerising's carriage by the very last man upon earth that you would wish to see with her!

"Oh, Mrs. Danby!" he cried, breaking out again with sudden vehemence, "why should I disguise the truth? This very night, if you do not save her, she is lost. I am sure of it—I saw *his* face."

Emilia turned pale as death—a sickness came over her, and her heart beat so rapidly that she could hardly breathe. She had started up—she sat down again. "Save her! save her!" she muttered. "What is to be done? Only tell me what can be done?" Then, holding her hands pressed against her bosom to stay the flurry of her spirits, she said, more composedly, "Yes, Mr. Wilcox—give me a moment's reflection. She shall not perish if we can save her. Assist me to think what course to pursue."

"I will call up Mrs. Lenox's carriage, that you may immediately return to town. You will overtake her before she has finished dressing, probably. If too late for that, you will follow her to Mrs. Castlerising's house in Harley Street. If too late for that, I confess I am at a loss what to advise."

"I know her dress," said Emilia, now quite restored to her wonted energy. "If too late for that, we must follow her to the masquerade. She *shall not* be lost. We—I say *we*—for I am sure you will not desert me in this extremity, Mr. Wilcox."

I need not give you his assurances—they understand one another, at least, perfectly.

I hasten through all these preliminary steps; I know not why I give you these conversations; my mind is disturbed, and in a sort of flurry; this is an odious and a painful subject.

It was impossible to get the carriage up for a considerable time; three-quarters of an hour or more had elapsed before it could be found; a quarter more before Mrs. Danby could reach it; a quarter more before the coachman could disembarass himself from the surrounding crowd of carriages; and it was ten o'clock before, in spite of her impatience, she could reach town.

Mr. Wilcox had settled with her that, as soon as he had seen her into the carriage, he should mount his horse, gallop onward, and learn all he could of the Duke's plans for the night; that he would then return to Grosvenor Street and report what discoveries he had made: if Mrs. Lenox were still there, all would be well; if not, that Emilia, under his escort, should follow her wherever she was.

It was but too true, as Mr. Wilcox had suspected—a scene of the most dreadfully violent description had passed between Colonel and Mrs. Lenox in that remote and secluded part of the garden to which he had hurried her; they had met, inflamed with mutual jealousy, and irritated by mutual contempt.

She, her heart still fluttering, her imagination filled with the conversation she had been engaged in, and he, in a state of mind upon leaving Emilia which ought to have made him quarrel seriously with himself, instead of, as is the case with too many in such moods, being a quarreller with all the world besides—more especially with that wife whom he injured so deeply by that unprincipled comparison with another which almost taught him to hate her.

He had hurried her, as I have said, to one of the deep seclusions of that varied garden, a leafy labyrinth cut in deep yew hedges; and there that scene took place which sent him, almost wild with passion, from the garden, vowing that no power on earth should ever prevail upon him to see her more; while Lisa, wounded to the quick by his violent and almost outrageous bearing, agitated by secret dissatisfaction with herself, cut to the heart by his expressions of contemptuous indifference, jealous of Emilia, and driven almost to madness by what she thought the good understanding between them, seemed at once to break all bounds. She was like a little fury; she railed, she wept, she defied him. She uttered the last shameless defiance that can pass a woman's lips, till, almost mad with rage, he broke from her, telling her to go where she would, and do what she would, for if he lived ten thousand, thousand years, he would never see nor speak to her more.

And so this most shocking and disgraceful scene of passion terminated.

Shaking, weeping, choking with sorrow and rage, with wounded affection, offended pride, and exasperated temper—it was thus the tempter found her. The contrast of his adoration, his humility, his false and hypocritical tenderness, was too strong; the faith, if such a name can be given to the unholy contract, was pledged—the promise exchanged; and Lisa left the gardens with the careless and dissipated Mrs. Castlerising to dress for that masquerade from which she had promised not to return home again.

No wonder that she avoided meeting Emilia; no wonder that the first result of her desperate engagement was the resolution that the tried, severe, and virtuous friend should henceforward neither see nor hear of her more.

CHAPTER LVI.

Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain.—BYRON.

THE note which Emilia received while she was in Mrs. Lenox's nursery was from Mr. Wilcox, as you will have anticipated.

It briefly related ~~that~~ ~~he had~~ brought a carriage, had procured tickets and dominoes for himself and for her; that the party from Mrs. Castlerising's was already gone; and that it was necessary they should immediately follow to the rooms.

He would explain himself further, he said, as they went along.

We have seen how she hastily put on her mask, wrapped herself in the black domino, and entered the carriage, where this indefatigable friend was waiting for her.

A few words were sufficient to explain what he had done since they had parted.

He had, indeed, been indefatigable.

He was of old, you know, an unwearied hunter; and, urged by his good and honest heart, and his determination to save his old acquaintance from the horrors of guilt into which she was about to be betrayed, he had used his talent to no small effect in tracking the Duke's movements, and had acquired a wonderful amount of information in the time.

He had discovered the dress the Duke was to wear at the masquerade; he had been to Newman's, and had learned that one of the Duke's carriages, with two pair of posters, was ordered to be in waiting at the corner of — Street; and he had taken the precaution to order a chaise and four horses for himself, to stand ready nearly at the same spot, in case, in the confusion of the evening, they should escape his vigilance, and a pursuit of the fugitives be rendered necessary.

All this he had done; and he now asked Mrs. Danby how far she was prepared to follow, in order to rescue her friend from the impending destruction.

Emilia, her heart beating with that strange, vague terror with which the pure and innocent find themselves filled when brought into actual relation with vice and crime, was leaning back in the carriage, her handkerchief to her eyes, though I believe she was not weeping.

"Follow her!" she said, in a low but determined voice, "I would follow her to the extremity of Europe. Yes, my Lisa, I will snatch you from vice, if it is too late to save you from infamy!"

She then, with much feeling, reiterated her thanks to Mr. Wilcox for the exertions he had made.

They proceeded, after this, in silence for a short way, and then Emilia suddenly thought of what would be Mr. Danby's anxiety and surprise at her continued absence. It was impossible to return home, in order to ask his sanction of her proceedings; her impatience to reach the ball-room, her horror lest she should

arrive too late, were too great to admit the possibility of such a delay.

She felt sure that she might rely upon his kindness and the justice of his principles to approve of the step she was about to take; the only thing necessary was to apprize him of it immediately.

She desired to stop at a stationer's shop, wrote a short and hasty note to Mr. Danby, consigned it to the man behind the counter; and, relying upon his promise that it should be forwarded in a quarter of an hour, returned to the carriage and resumed her way to the masquerade.

This note Mr. Danby never received.

The rooms were dazzling with a perfect galaxy of lights when Mrs. Danby and Mr. Wilcox entered, and resounding with the loud music and with the hum of many voices, as the merry maskers passed to and fro, and saluted each other with the usual questions as they passed.

There was the ordinary confused, incongruous medley of forms and colours which a masked ball presents, and which, added to the hideous effect of the masks themselves, renders it anything but pleasing in a room such as this. That which, diffused in the streets, as abroad, in a genuine carnival, is grotesque, gay, and amusing, assumes a very different appearance in a London ball-room; it is usually a scene as little entertaining as pleasing, and that is the reason, I suppose, why the fancy ball has superseded it.

The continual endeavour at the representation of a character with which nothing else is in harmony, the medley of different costumes, forms, and colours, without either aim or keeping, defeat the purposes of society without substituting anything as good in their place. If there is to be acting, let us have good acting—a clever proverb or charade. If it is for the mere purposes of conversation that people meet, why make such fools of themselves?

There were gathered together on the present occasion what everybody knows are always on such occasions to be found—monks and nuns, Albanians and Circassians, Turks and Persians, nursery-maids with babies six feet high, milk-maids, emperors, and clowns.

The wisest of the company were in their dominoes; these, having no character to support, talked rather agreeably together; the rest was all nonsense.

In the most conspicuous part of the room, and glittering under the light of a giant chandelier, there was one group, however, so exceedingly well imagined, and so very splendidly dressed, that it excited universal admiration: this was Mrs. Castlerising's party, representing the Rape of the Lock.

They had already formed their splendid quadrille when Emilia and Mr. Wilcox entered, and, glittering with brocade and jewels, were dancing to the animating music of the loud-sounding band. The sylphs, with their azure and silver draperies and sparkling wings, fluttered round the Belinda of the scene.

She was a beautiful figure, radiant with diamonds, and elaborately dressed in the splendid costume of her day. She danced with indescribable ease and grace, and flirted her large painted fan as she chatted gaily with the gentlemen who surrounded her, arrayed in their gold-embroidered waistcoats, velvet coats, rolled stockings, and red-heeled shoes.

My Lord was there, of course; but Sir Plume, it was universally acknowledged, outshone him. He rapped his box, and strutted, and talked nonsense that was sense, as Sir Plume should do. He was evidently in the very highest spirits, and extremely clever and witty.

The two black dominoes stood by and watched.

Bolinda was really inimitable, the very perfection of whim and gaiety; and her repartees were received with a chorus of laughter by the whole admiring audience, in which chorus she herself merrily joined.

At first, the two black dominoes exchanged looks of astonishment; then they said, with dismay,—“That is not *she*!” Where was she, then? And was Sir Plume *he*?

Yes; there was no doubt of that. Mr. Wilcox had succeeded in obtaining certainty as to this apparently trifling matter. He had, moreover, caught a glimpse of him as he sat unmasked in his carriage.

He was unquestionably still there; and as unquestionably Newman’s posters still occupied the corner of the street.

But where was *she*?

Oh, could their eyes but have penetrated those masks!—could they but have pierced through those odious disguises—they might have found her.

Wrapped in a dark grey domino, seated in a remote corner of the room, they might have seen that miserable and already repentant being

Shivering and alone, listening to the merry laughter that broke from the lively party, watching the light and elegant figure of Sir Plume, as he fluttered from side to side, and already anticipating the destiny which awaits the victim of lawless and unhallowed passion, in the sort of contemptuous indifference to her present feelings which she read in his careless gaiety.

Alas! alas for the hideous mask which, as a wall of adamant, separated her from her true and faithful friends, and forbade the rescue!

The rooms are filling still—the rooms are fuller and fuller; and the music seems to thunder in her ears, and the gaudy crowd of dancers to swim before her eyes, like monstrous and unearthly apparitions.

Suddenly, Sir Plume has disappeared.

What is to be done?

The hope, the possibility, of intercepting her before the irrevocable flight, seems at an end. Where is she? How shall they discover her?

After a short consultation, the only possible course left to be adopted seemed to be to watch the movements of the carriage in waiting, and be prepared the moment it should set forward to follow and overtake it, if possible.

Mr. Wilcox hurried Emilia through the rain, now falling in torrents, placed her in the hack-chaise, and returned to watch.

More than half-an-hour—a mortal half-hour, during which it seemed as if she could hear her heart beat—followed.

At last there is a sudden rush—the black domino springs into the carriage.

“The Dover Road!”

And away they go full gallop.

“She is gone!” cried Mr. Wilcox, throwing himself back in the carriage, taking off his mask, and drawing breath. “She is gone; but, Heaven be thanked! we have not lost the trace of her.”

Emilia found it really impossible to speak.

“The carriage has taken the Dover Road—of that I am certain. We are in pursuit of them. Be comforted, dear Mrs. Danby; we shall overtake them still.”

But Emilia could receive no comfort. She could only keep her eyes fixed upon the window, looking out with a feeling of the most irritating impatience into the night, if night it could be called; for the grey dawn was already breaking upon the hills, as they issued from the streets, and followed at full speed the Dover Road.

It was raining still in the most pitiless manner; the ways were streaming with water; but nothing seemed to impede the headlong course of the carriage.

But in vain did she endeavour to penetrate the thick veil of falling waters—no carriage in advance of them was to be seen.

They mounted Blackheath Hill; and now the clouds began to break and dissipate, and the light of the dawn to spread: still no carriage appeared before them.

Emilia sank back in the chaise with a gesture of despair.

“Never mind, Mrs. Danby,” said Mr. Wilcox, vainly endeavouring to console her. “They have the start of us, I know: it was impossible not to lose a little time. But they are before us. I know the tickets were made out for Dartford.”

They were now at the bottom of Shooter’s Hill; and there, slowly winding up the steep ascent, there is a carriage!—a carriage with four posters!

Mr. Wilcox could scarcely forbear giving the view halloo!

The carriage before them gains the ascent, and is off again.

When they enter Dartford, it has changed horses, and been gone some time.

Again they descry it in the far distance; again they strain every nerve in pursuit: they mount the top of Gad’s Hill—they look down the steep; but the fugitives are gaining upon them. See how they fly down the descent!

Alas! alas!

But hold! hold! Look at the carriage!—what is that?—what

are they about?—it sways!—it sways!—it totters!—it totters!—it is going! it is going!—it is gone!—

Carriage, horses, drivers, all lie in one confused mass together at the bottom of the hill!

They soon came up with it.

The courier, the only servant in attendance, had been thrown off the box, but was not hurt, and was endeavouring to open the door of the light German travelling carriage, now all shattered and jammed together, and to extricate those within.

The first sounds to be heard were those of the shrill treble of a French female voice, in all the ecstasy of vociferous terror proper to her sex and nation.

And soon the figure of a Frenchwoman, of rather an inferior class, was drawn forth out of the window. She was, in fact, the wife of the courier, who, anxious to return to Paris, had consented to attend upon the strange lady so far, and whose husband, with the usual independent way of thinking of a Frenchman in such a case, had ensconced her in the carriage, as they waited at the corner of the street, rather than expose her to the torrents of rain which were falling.

"Ahi! ahi! ahi! Oh la! la! la! la! Oh, *je suis morte!* Ah, *je suis écrasée!* Ah, *je suis tuée!*" Ahi! ahi! ahi! ahi!" As she stood shaking herself upon the grass, and endeavouring to restore a little order to her toilet.

But who was drawn forth next?

Wrapped in a dark grey domino, her yet unclasped mask perfectly blistered with her penitent tears, almost insensible with grief and terror, the unhappy Lisa is torn rather than dragged from the carriage.

"Where am I?—What is it?—Who are you?"

She is clasped to the bosom of her Emilia!

Her arms cast passionately round that devoted friend, she clings to her as the dying, drowning wretch clings to the rock on which he hangs. She casts one grateful, worshipping look at her face, and faints into a death-swoon in her arms.

And was there no one else in that broken carriage?

No: thanks be to Heaven! the destroyer was not there.

He was a heartless and inconstant man; and at the very moment when he was sacrificing the hapless Mrs. Lenox to his vanity, the thirst for conquest and amusement had not forsaken him. Having secured his victim, and given directions to his courier, he had returned to the rooms to amuse himself with the Belinda of the evening, ordering the carriage to proceed with all despatch, and promising to overtake it in a few hours.

To this almost incredible piece of heartlessness was Emilia indebted for the unspeakable satisfaction of learning that the Duke was not in the carriage.

Emilia, with much the same feeling with which the mother strains to her breast the child just rescued from the devouring flames, raised the insensible figure in her arms, and, while

tears of grateful rapture were bathing her in torrents, carried the helpless form of her Lisa into a cottage hard by.

It was by this time six o'clock, and the cottagers were all up and astir.

A crowd of people soon gathered about the broken carriage, and assisted to disengage the postilions from their fallen horses and entangled harness.

One of the postilions was very much hurt; his leg was broken, and he appeared to have sustained some grievous bodily injury. Seeing a farmhouse at some little distance, of rather better appearance than the miserable cottage entered by Emilia, Mr. Wilcox had procured a shutter, and, despatching a messenger to the nearest surgeon, had carried the unfortunate man thither, and remained, with his usual good nature, by the poor fellow, bathing his temples, and endeavouring to assuage his agonies till the surgeon should arrive.

It was while he was thus employed, that a chariot and four was seen rapidly descending the hill: the voice of a servant on the box calling to the postilion was heard, and the carriage stopped at the scene of the catastrophe.

A young gentleman sprang out of it, and addressed the terror-stricken courier; inquired with equal rage and impatience what had happened, and where was the lady.

The courier could only, in his broken French, mutter an explanation, rendered more confused by the vociferations of his wife.

The gentleman listened with every expression of vexation and impatience, and, turning away, prepared to enter the cottage which the courier indicated.

But here he was met and confronted by Emilia.

"You are not coming in here," she said, with spirit; "this is no place, sir, for you. The kindest and best thing you can do for one whose reputation you have so deeply compromised is, to return immediately to town, and let those servants who were upon the broken carriage proceed to their destination in the chaise which brought me. Show yourself this morning at all the places you usually frequent; send those abroad who have alone witnessed what has passed; and let the hideous and disgraceful adventure of this night be buried in darkness and silence for ever.

"You *will* do this," said she, authoritatively and sternly—"you *will* do this, for the sake of one to whom you have proved yourself so cruel an enemy. It may yet be possible to restore her to that place which, thank Heaven! she has not yet forfeited; and may you, my Lord, learn to rejoice, as I do, that the misery you were preparing for her has been averted."

He stood crestfallen and cowed before her.

At last she said, mustering his pride and collecting his spirits,—

"And have you had the heroism alone to pursue your friend in this generous cause, or is there not some other of whom I may ask the question, by what right he, at least, presumes to interfere in my affairs?"

"Every one has a right to interfere to prevent crime," said she, indignantly; "and he must be base indeed, who would revenge himself upon the man who has saved him from the perpetration of guilt such as this!"

She was, however, most anxious that no meeting should take place between the Duke and Mr. Wilcox. She feared the spirit of her good friend might not tamely submit to insults which the Duke might offer.

But her generous spirit and persuasive reason triumphed in this, as in so many other instances.

Struck by her generous devotion—her righteous abhorrence of crime—her truth and spirit—the insolent indifference to wrong at last gave way; he coloured, he faltered, he turned away in silence; and, without uttering a word more, entered his carriage, and Emilia had the inexpressible consolation of seeing him drive off to town.

The French servants, in Emilia's chaise, were sent on to Dover, never having even seen the face of the young lady left behind.

All this had consumed much time.

It was ten o'clock, at least, before the Duke entered the chaise to return to town; and Emilia, though extremely anxious to communicate with Mr. Danby, was still more desirous not to afford the slightest clue by which this odious adventure could come to light. She could send, therefore, no message through the postilion; and she resolved not to procure fresh horses and a carriage to remove Lisa, till the ruins of the Duke's equipage had been taken away.

This occupied two hours more.

They were passed by the bed on which Lisa lay, holding her deliverer's hand in hers, covering it with her kisses, and bathing it with her repentant tears; uttering, all the while, the most fervent ejaculations of thankfulness, now to Heaven, and now to her Emilia, for her preservation.

Rare and almost unexampled fate! She had been suffered to stand upon that dreadful threshold which ushers the miserable victim into the confines of vice. She had been allowed to realise all its deformity, and to taste of its misery and its terrors; and she had been spared, as by a miracle, and been snatched from destruction by the energy and courage of her only friend.

Her ecstasy of thankfulness was almost more than she could bear. Emilia feared at moments that she would expire in her arms.

Then she would talk wildly of the children from whom she had parted, as she thought, for ever, and whom she now so soon should see again; and then her hysteric laugh rang through the cottage. But the name of her deeply-injured husband never once crossed her lips.

At last Mr. Wilcox returned from where he had been employed assisting the injured man and horses; and a messenger having been dispatched for a chaise from Tunbridge, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Emilia, supporting the fainting Lisa

in her arms, entered the chaise: Mr. Wilcox followed after; the steps are up, the door is shut, and they are off on their return to town.

I have hurried through scenes odious and painful, but upon which, perhaps, I might have lingered, with profit, longer, because I share your impatience to know what had become of the unhappy Mr. Danby.

We left him in that paroxysm of despair which visits men, like him, unused to violent sensations, unhabituated to that struggle with themselves which finally achieves the victory, and restores, at last, the equilibrium of the mind: no young and romantic girl was ever more completely the slave of her affections than was Mr. Danby.

The prospect of his life had long been cloudy; at length a sudden gleam of brightness and of hope had illuminated his heart with a joy too great for words. Then suddenly, and at once, and without preparation, the sun of his existence set in night, and he was lost in the most hideous darkness.

He had no arms with which to resist the intensity of his feelings; he had no other sentiments to divert the force of this one passion to which he had abandoned his soul. The idea of life became insupportable; it was in obedience to instinct, rather than as the result of reflection, that he went out to seek the means of destroying it.

Pity him—compassionate the force of an honest affection, however blameworthy its demonstration—and drop the veil in sorrow over the vast but hasty error of such a man!

We left Mrs. Danby returning home with tottering steps, miserable, in spite of the hardness of her heart, at the sight of her son's extreme misery. She was old: emotion is rarely excited in the old; they are passive to the ordinary effects of ordinary events; but awaken it within—shake the aged and decayed tree, and it falls.

She tottered along, leaning upon Biggs and Susan; Susan no longer cheering her with comfortable words, but silent and distracted by her own doubts, but certainly doubting still.

Suddenly one of those ideas which, gleaming like an unexpected flash of winter lightning, strike across the thought—coming we know not whence, and leading we know not whither, but suddenly interrupting the present train of ideas, and arising, it would seem, from no foregone association—struck across her mind.

She suddenly dropped her mistress's arm.

"Bless you, Mr. Biggs! take her home, and tell the girl to lay her on the bed till I get in. I *must* go back again for a moment."

"What are you going away for, Susan?" said her mistress peevishly. "How can I get home without your help?—and I'm sure nobody *shall* put me to bed but you."

"Never heed me, madam. Get home as well as you can with

Mr. Biggs. I'll not be five minutes after you. Take care of her for mercy's sake, Mr. Biggs, for she's as weak as an infant."

And before he could answer her she was out of sight.

She walked fast—she almost ran; pushing her way among the foot passengers, who were now rapidly filling the flagways—thrusting them on this side and on that with the force of a mad-woman as she hurried along.

She reached Chancery Lane, and knocked like thunder at the door.

Mary, half asleep after the night's watching, opened it.

"Bless you, girl, let me in! Where's the master?"

"Oh, I don't know! Gone to his chambers, I suppose. He went out directly after you was gone."

She flew to his chambers, but he had not been there.

The heart of poor Susan now began to beat with a violence very unusual with that stout heart of hers; her stalwart frame shook like an aspen; her large, ruddy face was pale as the shadow of death. What should she do?

Would he ever come home again?—and, if so, how would he be carried home?

She saw him stretched upon a bier, her loved, her honoured, her revered Matthew Danby, drawn from the shrouding waters, or victim of the poison given by his own hand.

Would they bring him to his chambers when they had found him? Would they bring him to his deserted home?

Uncertain—unable to move from the spot—hesitating, but turning her eyes first one way, then the other, she stood upon the threshold of the house, from which she could command a view of the door of his chambers.

What is that coming up the street?

Who is he—that old, decrepid man, who totters as he walks, and seems scarcely half alive? Is it he?

No; he was at least a foot taller than that poor shrunken being.

Ah, but it is he!

She withdraws a little within the house, but still holding the door ajar as she watches him.

He advances very slowly, and walking as if he hardly could walk—he approaches—he passes the door of his chambers—he reaches the house, and enters.

Susan bangs to the door behind him. He has a phial in his hand!

It is full.

To dash the phial to the earth with one blow of her mighty fist—to catch him in her large and bony arms, and clasp him to her heart with a shout rather than a burst of tears—was the work of a second.

She disengages herself—she holds him off—she looks at him again and again. Yes! he is still alive!

And she burst into a fresh passion of tears.

He looked somewhat ruefully at the remains of the phial as

they lay scattered on the floor, and at the laudanum streaming over the oilcloth.

He shook his head sadly.

"You have done me no kindness, Susan," he said; "but let it be as you will."

And, kissing the rugged cheek of the crying woman, he began slowly to ascend the stairs.

He went into the sitting-room, and sat down in his usual place.

She followed quickly.

When she came in, he pointed to his hand and nerveless arm, which it was no longer in his power to raise.

Three in the afternoon is striking upon all the innumerable clocks of London—from deep-sounding Paul's the voice is taken up, and flies from steeple to steeple, over the fair and wide-spread city; and from the chapel of the Rolls visits the silent recesses of Chancery Lane.

Susan has been chafing his arm long; it is all he will allow to be done. He will not be persuaded to go to bed, nor suffer a medical man to be sent for. He sits there in his helplessness; and she, that last and faithful friend, stands sympathising and sorrowing by.

She has ordered Biggs to keep his master in the dining-room, she will not allow her Matthew to be disturbed in his misery.

Suddenly a chaise, coming at a prodigious rate, is heard rattling up the street.

A loud knock at the door makes Mr. Danby start from a sort of dozing slumber into which he had fallen—steps are let hastily down—voices are heard on the lobby—light and quick footsteps ascend the stairs; the door opens—'tis she!

Beautiful as an angel! her soft white robes flowing like ethereal drapery round her, she crosses the floor, falls upon his neck, bursts into tears, and cries,—

"I have saved her!"

He gave a deep groan—struggled—choked—there is a rattle in his throat.

"Good God of Heaven! what is this? Susan! Susan! brandy! —Mr. Danby!—dear, dear Mr. Danby!—brandy! brandy! there, for my sake! Nay, open your eyes. He is going—he is going!"

She pours the brandy down his throat, her tears streaming in torrents over his face. She wraps her arms round him—she bathes his temples—she kisses his forehead. Had his spirit even crossed the mysterious threshold, I believe such embraces would have had power to call it back.

He opened his eyes—he saw the impassioned affection speaking in every working feature—and fell helpless and nerveless, but living, into her arms.

There was an end, from that time and for ever, of all

restraints, of all misunderstandings, of all coldness, of all unhappiness, between them.

They loved one another.

I shall not expose his transports to you—a stranger shall not intermeddle with his joy. I leave him in the fruition of that felicity which a heart so honest, simple, and feeling as his will sooner or later certainly obtain, from a heart as simple, good, and honest as his own.

Few and brief were the words of explanation; and leave was obtained to bring the penitent and forlorn one home.

The beautiful Lisa, now no longer petulant and perverse, but humbled, grateful, and sad, wrapped closely in her veil and large cloak, is received into Emilia's home—that dark, wretched, despised home, now bright with the radiance of affection and virtue.

To her it seems like paradise.

And Mr. Wilcox!

In the midst of her various causes for anxiety and excitement, will she forget him?—No.

She has found time to slip down stairs as he waited in the passage, and to hold a brief consultation upon what should next be done. He promises to make his way to Grosvenor Street, and learn how things are situated there, and to prepare the way for Mrs. Lenox's return. They agreed that they could not venture to take her to her husband's house before some preparation had been made. It was possible that the indignant and too passionate Colonel Lenox might have already given orders that the doors should be shut against her, and thus that scandal, which they were so anxious to avoid, be occasioned by a refusal on the part of her own servants to admit her.

Emilia had taken the trembling and exhausted Lisa up stairs, and had laid her upon her own bed; and then, having kissed her father, and answered his inquiries in a brief and hurried manner, she returned to the drawing-room and to Mr. Danby.

He was still sitting in his chair. She drew a small one to his side, and took hold of his hand.

"Not that hand, my dear," said he, quietly; "the other for ever, my Emilia."

Such a pang—such a feeling of tenderness at this deep, this devoted love—crossed her heart, as she comprehended, from Susan's explanation, what had occurred! You may, perhaps, imagine its force in a character such as hers.

She was asking hasty questions in the little back room, where she had withdrawn to write immediately for a physician, while Susan, in her usual impetuous and unstudied manner, was detailing all that had passed, Emilia's tears falling fast upon the paper on which she was writing her hasty scrawl. Susan departed immediately with the missive, and she returned to sit by her husband.

"Ah!" said she, with a tone of gentle and tender reproach, "how could you mistrust me so far, Mr. Danby? Do you not

know, that not for all the universe contains would I be guilty of a wrong like this? and do you not also know that the universe itself should not tempt me to leave you? Do you think my heart is as cold as marble, that I could remain for ever insensible to such an affection as yours? Why have you doubted me so long? Ah, wicked suspicion! It was the first fault I ever noted in you," said she, gently kissing the paralysed hand. "You have paid too dearly for it—let it be the last of our mistakes."

"My dear," he said, "I have been greatly to blame; but I am sure you would think the misery of the last twenty-four hours punishment enough for all my injustice and unkindness to you. And I thank God that He has preserved me from the crime which in the depth of my despair I would have committed! I desired to die; but He has spared me to enjoy such a full measure of happiness as I could not have believed the human frame was capable of sustaining, if I had not myself sustained it."

The physician was not long in arriving. He gave hopes that the effects of a stroke arising from such violent emotion, and not from any real decay of the vital powers, might only be temporary.

The event proved his prediction to be just; but it was a considerable time before the hand—it was the right hand—recovered its powers.

Even this little circumstance served still further to unite them, as she sat by him, now no longer pale, faded, and dressed in that dark, discoloured costume, which, like the dingy feathers of a bird, gives evidence of the failing spirit of life within, but bright, delicate, elegant, and charming, in her white dress and blue ribands!

Did you ever see that divine picture of Hayter's—Lady Rachel Russell taking notes for her husband at his trial? for that is just as she used to look, sitting at her writing-table by the side of Mr. Danby's arm-chair, receiving his instructions, lifting up her sensible and expressive face, full of business and happiness—her pen in her hand, listening attentively, and then turning away to write what he directed, and so on.

I wish you who think, as most of you do, in this year of 1845—in this our nineteenth century, which indeed seems, like March, to have come in all stormy, like the raging lion, but to be going out, all flowers and silk curtains, like a lamb—(I heard Susan make use of this confusion of images to express her meaning; you are not to suspect me of it)—I wish you, I say, who most of you, I know, think that life without every imaginable refinement of elegance and luxury is a gift scarcely worth accepting at all—I wish you could have seen these two, in their little poky corner in Chancery Lane, with their horsehair-seated chairs, and their walls—still not fresh painted—busy at their work together.

But I dare say not one in a hundred of you would be able to comprehend the beauty of the picture. You would think it a

very miserable and contemptible sort of happiness in such a little ugly room.

People who live in such little, dark, ugly rooms have not even a right to esteem themselves happy.

Happiness is the right, as well as the attribute, only of those who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day.

So argues the nineteenth century.

And I waste my labour to prove it reasons wrong; for such is the abundance of its riches, which it showers at a railroad pace upon every one who thinks it worth while to hold out his hat and catch of them, that those who cannot wear purple and fine linen will soon be so few that, to the eye of political economy, it will very little matter, I suppose, whether they are happy or not.

And now, like some other authors I am acquainted with, who are guilty of the same inconsistency, after haranguing upon the happiness and advantages of little close rooms, and old, shabby furniture, I shall end my story by leaving my heroine in a very different place.

CHAPTER LVII.

Oh, what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!—LONGFELLOW

It might be about five or six months after the termination of the last chapter.

I must count back to say how long; but what I know was, it was on a certain day in the very beginning of October of that identical year. Now days in October are, as we all know, of manifold kinds: there are some very rainy, and very windy, and very cold, as has been especially the case in this present year. But the sun has a good deal of power still; and if it beat as hotly upon Emilia's head while she was writing for her husband as it does upon the old man while he is writing for you, I do not wonder that she threw down the pen, and looked heated and smothered, and as if she would give the world for a mouthful of fresh air.

"You are tired, my dear, I am sure," said Mr. Danby, with one of his quiet smiles; "but would you oblige me, before you ask Susan set out upon your walk, by first reading this deed aloud to me? It may need a little correction, which your pen shall give it, and then you shall be at liberty to go a-walking."

She took up the paper, and changed colour a little at the title:

"Deed of conveyance of the Oaks manor-house and estate."

"Read on, said he.

She did so, and had become lawyer enough by this time to understand that was purchased for and conveyed to—

Whom, do you think?

To herself!

"I never made you a wedding present," said he. "Come, Emilia, seal it with a kiss, and it is yours."

It was at the Oaks that I made their acquaintance.

My business in life, as you by this time know, has been to make acquaintance with all sorts of people, and to learn their adventures.

You know, having no family ties of my own, my destiny has been to be a mere looker-on.

When I knew them, they spent the finest part of every year at the Oaks; at least Emilia did. Mr. Danby could not live long away from his chambers, so he went to and fro.

He gets down to luncheon easily in these days, as you can believe.

The Oaks is a charming place, though there is nothing particularly romantic, or of any very remarkable character, about it, if we except its very fine timber and thicketty woods. The terrace is preserved with the utmost care, and at the end of it, sedulously repaired, is a very ancient green wooden seat: it is nearly become touchwood with age.

Everything is kept in the finest order. It is the pleasure of the mistress that so it should be.

I think you might be rather disappointed in Emilia's appearance, after all I have said, because I have talked of her beauty; but you would probably not call it beauty.

Hers is, however, the most charming, and interesting, and agreeable countenance I ever beheld; so open, so engaging, so noble and frank in its expression, united to that very first of graces, the character of a high intelligence, and to that last perfection of loveliness, a sweet expressive mouth.

She is one of the most finished and elegant women in her appearance that I know.

As for Mr. Danby, he is just exactly the same—as negligent in his attire, as shambling in his gait, as awkward and unstrung in his attitudes, and, in spite of his wife's lectures—and she can lecture, like the rest of them, at proper times—is apt to be just as cynical and just as suspicious as he was before he was corrected.

Her frank and confiding temper, however, strikes the balance in the household.

She is now about forty years of age; and she has a son, maybe about fifteen.

Leonard Danby.

If I could show you him, I could show you what I call a promising boy.

I will say nothing of his mother's happiness in him, but that she now understands the full force of *her* mother's expression,—

"I have loved you *passionately!*"

And she seems as little likely to be wounded through her, perhaps, scarcely reasonable passion, as Mrs. Wyndham had been through hers.

Here, at the Oaks, I first met Colonel and Mrs. Lenox; for you will not easily believe that, after having effected so much

for her friend's happiness, Emilia rested content till she had completed her work, and, by the assistance of Mr. Danby reconciled her with her husband.

Colonel Lenox had, it is true, in his first fit of passion and desperation, left his home, and resolved to return to it no more.

But he had not been many hours away before better feelings began to visit the father's heart; he thought of his children and wrote to Emilia a letter, such as it at last became him to write, entreating her to visit the unfortunate little creatures thus abandoned by both their parents, and to tell him how things went with them.

This furnished the opening for further communication.

Emilia, though she had not ventured to restore her friend to her home till authorised by her husband, fetched nurse and the little ones to the side of that bed where, at length yielding to the effect of the long and violent excitement she had been enduring, the sick and feeble mother lay.

She allowed her to clasp these recovered treasures to her heart, to cover them with kisses, to bathe them with her tears, and in faltering and broken accents again and again to pour forth her fervent thanks and blessings upon the head of the friend who had saved her.

The long *maladie de langueur* which succeeded gave Lisa time to reflect; she wanted neither a good understanding nor a good heart.

She rose from her bed chastised and corrected; and if a hasty word in future would rise to her lips, the blush of shame would rise as readily! It was repented of, apologised for, and pardon asked and given, before the words had time to cool upon the ear.

Colonel Lenox had also found time for reflection. The idea of the horrible snare into which, by his irrational violence, he had been about to precipitate this young and thoughtless being, whom he had sworn to cherish and to protect, rose reproachful before his imagination. He started with horror at himself, as one about to fling a helpless creature before the jaws of a devouring monster; and he began to believe that even *he* might have been greatly to blame.

The influence of Emilia and Mr. Danby were successful in at length restoring them to each other; and a new life was begun, not, it is true, unchequered or unclouded—how could two such faulty beings escape faults?—but reasonable, and upon the whole, happy, and growing more and more happy every day. For the serious cares of life, to which he devoted himself, and which she did her very best to perform tolerably, began to occupy their time and thoughts.

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, he took his wife and children abroad.

The Duke had kept his own counsel; the escapade of the masquerade had never transpired, and the pride of Colonel Lenox escaped the greatest punishment it could have received.

I used often to meet them at the Oaks; for they spent a great part of the year at Haldimands.

'They were, when I saw them, two of the handsomest people I ever beheld.

His was really a noble face and figure; but there was still something haughty, and, I thought, a little hard in his expression, which never made him a great favourite with me.

And she, in spite of her excessive beauty and elegance, had a something, it might be in the least affected—or was it only *inconéquente*, as our neighbours say? I could not exactly tell what it was, but she pleased me much less than Emilia.

The person I like best to meet at the Oaks is Mr. Wilcox. He never married; he continued to lead a bachelor's life at the Headston House, which he had inherited, as you know, from his father.

It is the prettiest place I ever saw.

An old, low-roofed, peaked and gabled Elizabethan house, really built in that grand woman's reign, with narrow windows, and their stone mullions, and their small panes, and the thatch thick enough to harbour myriads of swallows; and the chimneys, wreathed and clustered, the most ornamental things about the house. It is buried in a thicket of hazels, and birches, and beeches; but there is a paved walk in front, shaped like a T, which runs opposite the windows. This walk leads down straight from the house to a wide pebbly trout stream, clear as glass, and shining like crystal, and all hung over its high banks with nuts, and tufts of grass, and traveller's-joy, and wild geraniums. There are plenty, too, of old-fashioned flowers, straggling up against the house-wall—marigolds and hollyhocks, and virgin's-bower, and such like: it is not very neat; but it is so excessively wild, rustic, and pretty!

You enter the hall, which is a low, rambling, dark sort of place, the opposite casement window being buried in rose-bushes. It is almost surrounded with low benches, made of twisted oak branches, and tapestried with rural spoils, and the implements of rural sports.

Here is the fox's brush, and there is the otter's paw, and there the wild cat's hide, and there antlers with so many ties, and there a fishing-basket and rods, and there a grey kite stuffed, and there a wild swan's skin, and curious mosses, and curious branches of trees, and odd bits of minerals and shells; and all the natural curiosities which Mr. Wilcox, in his various rambles with nature, has collected.

He is now sitting upon a bench, dressed in his fisher's jacket, and with the strangest cap you ever saw upon his head—is putting the last rigging to a boat, which he is finishing for that fine boy, who is deeply engaged in observing his operations; while the loveliest little creature you ever saw, in her white frock, little, naked, half-socked legs, and straw bonnet and blue ribands, is holding his hand, and fixing her large blue eyes upon the gaudy silken streamers.

She wants them to play with, the little creature, but does not like to ask for them.

But if she does not catch the silks, she is catching something else, that beautiful little thing, whose name is Flora Lenox. She has laid hold of that great boy's heart, and she never let it go again.

In a low parlour, filled with old-fashioned chairs covered with needlework, the fruits of his poor old mother's unwearied industry for fifty years, at another low-cased oriel window, which is now open, and where the buzzing of the bees may be heard among the honeysuckles, which, dropping about in the most admired disorder, are half hiding the kitchen-garden beyond, sit two ladies,—

My Emilia, and the still lovely, still delicate, and sweetly smiling Lisa. They are leaning their arms against the window-seat, looking now into the garden, and now at a very tall, gaunt figure of a woman, her shawl pinned over her black dress, in the stiffest and most precise possible manner, who is busily employed with a hammer, and knocking up a few brass-headed nails under the cornice over Mr. Wilcox's mantelpiece, she being able to reach to the ceiling of his room perfectly well. The nails are to suspend a *tableau du genre*, as it is called, of dead game, china vase, fruit, and flowers, the joint production of the two ladies, who are now engaged with—"A little higher, Susan—a little more apart, Susan!" while she raps lustily away.

The picture is a present to Mr. Wilcox; the dead game by Emilia, who has become an excellent artist in subjects of this nature; the rest by Mrs. Lenox—greatly her superior in this one respect.

Two gentlemen are walking up and down the garden: one holds a newspaper, the other carries his hands behind his back, and is shuffling along beside his lofty and splendid-looking companion.

They, of course, are settling the affairs of the nation, to which the rest of the party are shamefully indifferent; but where are poor little feverish Master Timmy and the baby?

Why, Master Timmy is in the Blues.

And the baby is married.

Now, was it not better, dear reader, think you, that all these pairs, once united, should have remained united, done their duties by and learned to love one another, than that they should have changed partners, according to the fashion of some of our Continental neighbours, and found mutual failings, and mutual discontent, and fresh reason for changing again, in every new form of the marriage life they might have tried?

And, moreover, is it not just possible, think you, that some of the discomforts of married life—a very small proportion, of course—might be ameliorated, if husbands now and then received a lesson from the clever, ingenious Mr. Punch, and learned to correct themselves as well as wives?

